

Copyright  
by  
Jaishikha Nautiyal  
2018

**The Dissertation Committee for Jaishikha Nautiyal Certifies that this is the approved  
version of the following dissertation:**

**Quotidian Rhetoric: An Impasse of Deweyan Aesthetics and Affective  
Encounters**

**Committee:**

---

Scott R. Stroud, Supervisor

---

Barry Brummett

---

Joshua G. Gunn

---

Joan Faber McAlister

**Quotidian Rhetoric: An Impasse of Deweyan Aesthetics and Affective  
Encounters**

**by**

**Jaishikha Nautiyal**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**May 2018**

## **Dedication**

To  $\sim$ : the “anti- $\sim$ emory” to my “vertical being” thinking and the immanent pharmakon to my  
arboretic disease

## Acknowledgements

I am fresh out of words after having written for what seems like a century in a protracted second. It is no wonder that every remaining fiber of my inventional capacity wishes to save and savor the most challenging and most gratifying part for last. That part is at the heart of everything I have been able to produce in these pages: overwhelming gratefulness toward those who have helped me reach a defining moment in my graduate career, nonetheless, an ordinary moment in the scheme of life, death, and everything in between. I could not have imagined developing the idea behind this project, let alone executing it in different stages of research and writing without my advisor Dr. Scott Stroud, the most anchoring, grounding, challenging, and generous figure in my doctoral career at UT Austin. I thank Dr. Stroud for all our inspiring conversations and the innumerably free espressos I have enjoyed at his expense. My gratefulness is toward the sustained attention he has given me in the last five years, whether it be a quick office meeting, a random conference coffee chat or the unheard case of an advisor walking with his advisee from one NCA party to another—selfless gestures I can never return even if want. With deep sincerity, I would like to thank Dr. Josh Gunn for taking the time and energy in serving on my committee. More than that, I could not imagine learning anything about and embodying the ethics and rhythms of graduate school without Dr. Gunn’s intuitive seminars. It would also not be graduate school with Dr. Gunn if I did not mention the timeless, priceless, and shiner-induced after-words that he has generously sponsored for our entire class, seminar-after-seminar in the last five years. In a similar spirit, I would like to thank Dr. Barry Brummett for guiding me on my dissertation process and for all the wonderful seminars on Social Style and Burke that my cohort and I took with him. Actually, the generous and thoughtful context of Dr. Brummett’s several culinary creations made graduate learning ever so memorable and humbling. Finally, as the outstation person on my committee, I am indebted to Dr. Joan Faber McAlister who has exhibited a deep interest in my work and encouraged me to sharpen the political commitments of my dissertation

at each step. More than that, I am in awe of Dr. McAlister's exceptional sensitivity, sincere attention, and innumerable gestures of hospitality toward the networking needs of junior scholars. In Dr. McAlister, I have discovered a relentless advocate for all junior scholars and personally, a professional and steady mentor in the academy.

The labor of this dissertation is incomplete if I do not credit different forms of homes and families who have stood by me and sheltered me in every phase of this arduous journey. One home and family pertains to my now deceased grandfather Dr. K. Purohit whose eyes remain a loving presence of everything I have understood so far about life, death, love, divinity, joy, playfulness, courage, and vulnerability. I also know for a fact that without the enduring love, support, and humor of my parents, Drs. Annpurna and Vinod Nautiyal, I could not survive in the US. I may have traveled several thousand miles to pursue my academic dreams; however, without the strength of our unfailing bond, I simply could not persist here or elsewhere. Similarly, I am grateful to my sweet little sister Devika who extended her compassion and gentleness to me at a particularly fraught time during the Ph.D. process. I extend my heartfelt love and thankfulness to my second family in Fargo, Drs. Ann Burnett, Mark Meister, and Carolina who welcomed me into their life seven years ago and seven years later I am still on their family phone plan. On that account, friends too have their unique ways of making one feel at home through aimless laughter, humor, playfulness, silly quarrels over food, and the simple joys of togetherness. I would like to thank my best friends Heena and Sneha who live so far away from me but have brought home the feeling of love and togetherness, each time we have hugged—no matter where or when. When it comes to graduate school, I can count my friends on my fingers because I only have a few. Each one of them has made this process singular and memorable. I am thankful to my friend Brandon, one of the first people I became friends with in graduate school; he is someone who continues to amaze me with his thoughtfulness, culinary talents, and sensitivity. I am so glad that I found Elizabeth (Glow) in our doctoral program. Glow

became my one and only squash partner and I am grateful to her for being a thoughtful and beautiful friend all through graduate school. I am thankful to Erin for her friendship, kindness, and all the conversations we have had on mindfulness, scotch, wine, and travel. I need to mention my plaza people, Ana and Mackenzie who have co-produced several graduate school memories and anecdotes just because we all decided to show up. I thank them for their compassion, sensitivity, and fun in each of our plaza adventures. I am thankful to Matt for his generosity, kindness, and friendship. In addition to my friends in graduate school, I cannot not mention and thank Paola, one of the janitorial staff at UT and one of my first friends in Austin. In Paola, I find the sort of warmth one does not expect of strangers. In Paola, I find the sort of strength one expects only in kindred souls. I may see her every six months or even longer but each time is a reminder that the depths of the heart are profoundly mysterious.

Lastly, there is that unique and unexpected (UU) kind of home and family that one comes to experience as an ocular signature, the one you just know will autograph lifelong experiences and even after that. I attribute this unexpected and vulnerary mark to my non-foundational and non-rationally abiding family of Marnie and Lenu, with whom I belong unconditionally and without whom staying in the eye would mean nothing. Without this incontrovertible yet destitute sense of home, grad school would not become grad school, Hindi would not become Hindi, rhizomes would not become rhizomes, and trees would not become trees. Without this family, two little kids so far apart in Massachusetts and Uttarakhand would not become themselves, Lena would not become Lenu, Austin would not become Austin, the sensuality of music would not become itself, love would not become love, loss would not become loss, heartbreak would not become heartbreak, and hard work would not become hard work—in any imaginable sense to me. It is immaterial if neither one ends up reading these words here. What matters is the fact that we have willed and will continue to sign on to a trace of a feeling called ‘coming home, staying in the eye, never arriving, and perpetually becoming’ in love. Always.

# **Quotidian Rhetoric: An Impasse of Deweyan Aesthetics and Affective Encounters**

Jaishikha Nautiyal, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2018

Supervisor: Scott R. Stroud

Abstract: My work is an exploration of quotidian rhetoric which I argue involves the examination of mundane experiential contexts of communicative exchanges among bodies and ecologies in a democracy. Instead of just focusing on language use which has traditionally been the realm of rhetoric, this study focuses on those extra-cognitive refrains, i.e. largely underexplored routines, habits, means, and bodily rhythms that affect and are affected by how we interact with the sentient processes of living. Such experiences range from but are not limited to ordinary conversations at a get together, the same old commute to work, a walk to a coffee shop, an unarticulated glance shared with a pet, a nervous darting of eyes in front of someone familiar, a punctuating nostalgic feeling about a past technology/gadget, a moment of intense attachment shared with a pet or plant or an uncertain moment shared between two strangers on a bus. The point behind quotidian rhetoric is that it champions an embodied attention to the cognitive and somatic/extra-cognitive encounters of communication in the democratic commonplace that I discuss under the respective frameworks of American pragmatist John Dewey's work on aesthetic experience and affect theory. My work provides the communicative bridge to bring the diverse disciplines of affect studies and pragmatism in conversation since both fields return to the body to build sensate theories of everyday experiences. Through the study of quotidian rhetoric, I flesh out the rhetorical implications of somatic experiences underlying aesthetics and affects.



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	v
Abstract.....	viii
Table of Contents.....	ix
Introduction: Re-directing Attention to the Ordinariness of Process	
in the Commonplace.....	1
Encounter one.....	3
Encounter two.....	3
Situating the body in the everydayness of the encounters.....	4
Roadmap of quotidian rhetoric.....	9
Pragmatic import of and potential oppositions to quotidian rhetoric.....	17
Chapter 1: The Body in the Field: Its Presence, Eclipse, and Resurgence	
(1915-1945 and 2000-Present).....	19
The not so Dewey-eyed history of the body in the field.....	21
Mental hygiene, Dewey, and adjustment.....	23
Further impact of mental hygiene and adjustment on the body.....	26
Implications of communication's body-loss and contradictions with pragmatism.....	28
Re-tracing steps to Dewey's aesthetic theory.....	32
Minding and mining the somatic gap.....	33
Quotidian rhetoric and existing rhetorical accounts of everyday experiences.....	38
What quotidian rhetoric is not.....	41
The spectrum and organization of quotidian rhetoric.....	45
Aesthetic experiences and affects: A brief introduction.....	46
The meaning of rhythms in quotidian rhetoric.....	50
Life-affirming rhythms.....	52

Chapter 2: Quotidian Rhetoric: Deweyan Aesthetics and Affect in Rhetoric.....	57
Orientational Overlaps: Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory.....	58
Meliorism.....	59
Notion of Habit: Dewey in conversation with Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome.....	63
Sensation.....	69
Aesthetic dimensions of experience.....	71
Affective dimensions of experience.....	73
Aesthetic dimensions: In conversation with pragmatism and rhetoric.....	77
Rhetorical theory and affect.....	85
Chapter 3: The Impasse.....	90
A map misplaced: Impasses and detours toward quotidian rhetoric.....	92
Deweyan approach to embodiment.....	93
Affective approach to embodiment.....	94
Aesthetic and affective forms in quotidian rhetoric.....	96
Unpacking the conceptual impasse: Interchanges between text and field.....	99
Text.....	102
Context.....	104
Audience.....	106
Judgment.....	109
Ethics.....	111
Emergence of the food truck culture in North America: Historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts.....	115
Text in Praxis: Austin's Food Truck Culture	
Attitude, Orientations, and Detours.....	123
Live action cluster 1.....	130
Text.....	130
Context.....	133

Joy.....	138
Anxiety.....	142
Disgust.....	145
Audience.....	148
Judgment.....	152
Ethics.....	156
Live action cluster 2: SouthBites® Trailer Park at South by South West (SXSW) festival.....	158
Interlude to live action cluster 2.....	160
Text.....	161
Context.....	163
Life-affirming rhythms at SouthBites® Trailer Park.....	166
Audience.....	172
Judgment.....	175
Ethics.....	178

#### Chapter 4: Applications of Quotidian rhetoric: Food Truck Culture in the

Media.....	180
Rhetorical Analysis: The Great Food Truck Race: The Family Face-Off.....	182
Text.....	182
Context.....	185
Life-affirming rhythms of The Great Food Truck Race.....	188
Anxiety.....	189
Joy.....	192
Reflections on everyday and ordinary experiences of the show.....	197
Aesthetic dimensions of habits.....	200
Affective dimensions of habits.....	204
Audience.....	207
Patterns of appeals.....	207
Judgment.....	215

Ethics.....	224
Chapter 5: Implications of Quotidian Rhetoric.....	227
The impasse was an artful rhizome in making all this while.....	227
Implications of the impasse-as-artful rhizome.....	231
Emplacing artfulness in the impasse-as-artful rhizome.....	231
The artfulness of the impasse-as-artful rhizome.....	235
Enunciating the rhizome in the impasse-as-artful rhizome.....	239
Whither the impasse-as-artful rhizome: Implications for rhetorical engagement with pragmatism and affect.....	241
Implications of the impasse-as-artful rhizome for rhetorical field methods.....	247
Embodied particularity in fieldwork.....	252
Implications of the impasse-as-artful rhizome for rhetorical studies on food truck culture.....	257
Bibliography.....	260

# Quotidian Rhetoric: An Impasse of Deweyan Aesthetics and Affective Encounters

## Introduction

### RE-DIRECTING ATTENTION TO THE ORDINARINESS OF PROCESS IN THE COMMONPLACE

“There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together...Hence everything is production: production of *productions*, of actions and of passions; *productions of recording processes*, of distributions and of co-ordinates that serve as points of reference; *productions of consumptions*, of sensual pleasures, of anxieties, and of pain. Everything is production, since the recording processes are immediately consumed, immediately consummated, and these consumptions directly reproduced. This is the first meaning of process as we use the term: incorporating recording and consumption within production itself, thus making them the productions of one and the same process”—Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 2-4

Consider different encounters that unfold on any ordinary day and overlap between fictional and lived processes of experience. To be more specific, both feature academics in the United States whose habits and proclivities produce an experiential form or pattern imbued with certain styles of interacting, moods, feelings, tones, tastes, and bodily dispensations. Within these ordinary forms of experiences, individuals navigate intersecting lattices of race, class, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, abilities, privileges, and disenfranchisements, all of which produce and distribute something: more styles of interacting, moods, feelings, tones, tastes, and bodily dispensations. The

first one is an ordinary conversation among some academics socializing at a pot luck. The second one takes place unexpectedly at a national conference but can still be considered an ordinary phenomenon based on how interlocutors respond to each other through culturally common cues. In what follows next, I want to utilize the contrasting forms of the two conversations to heighten the cognitive (verbal, imaginative, and reason-based) quotient of experience by redirecting attention to a very important but easily dismissed aspect of communicative practices in current scholarship: the extra-cognitive or feeling-based refrains of bodily habits, daily routines, paces, and rhythms through which bodies engage with other bodies and ecologies on a day to day basis or what I will call *quotidian rhetoric* under the auspices of this work. I consider these refrains extra-cognitive because despite taking place in a symbolic milieu, their repetitiveness is prone to slippages in translatable experience. An example could be of a bus driver who habitually stops his vehicle irrespective of the stop just so riders who missed the bus by a minute or so can hop on. The driver's engagement with the riders is so commonplace that it may become invisible to the commuters and their commutes. Yet there is something more to this quotidian refrain that highlights a somatic habit of relating with the world, of attending to its ongoing movements and arrests that can make for a curious area of investigation. Based on such kinds of everyday examples within the extra-cognitive domain, I will urge a more sustained attention to the somatic, that is the bodily aspects of everyday communication. Such embodied aspects play a significant but largely overlooked role in creating capacious and democratic practices that welcome differences in communicative similarities and vice-versa. Somatic refrains of everyday communication are rhetorical because, despite their largely habitual and conscious/unconscious performance, they reveal one's orientation to modes of living and non-living based on which democracies operate in

the day to day. The examples that follow underscore the rhetorical features of such quotidian encounters through an emphasis on their cognitive and extra-cognitive aspects. The examples help me make a case for everyday communicative practices that may overlap and generate exclusive, inclusive, expansive and/or reductive forms of experience.

**Encounter one.** A professor at a tier one research institution decides to have some graduate students and colleagues over for dinner. The gathering includes people of different races, colors, genders, and sexual orientations. When I refer to this particular encounter, I will focus on how races are generally referenced colloquially based on color and how that impacts the form of the ensuing encounter. The mood is jovial and for the most part everyone seems to be enjoying. Just then, another professor who is Caucasian and has recently adopted an Indian baby arrives at the party. Some graduate students are excited at the prospect of playing with an effortless bundle of joy and approach the professor. The group of graduate students features students of different races and colors. All students try to engage the baby. The baby laughs and plays with Caucasian students. On this, the African American, Hispanic, and Asian (South Asian, South East Asian) students remark facetiously how a “sea of whiteness” must overwhelm the brown baby. When the baby holds the fingers of one of the African American students and is eager for one of the South Asian students to hold her, the rest of the students joke how the baby easily recognizes her own “brown kind.” I am a part of this encounter.

**Encounter two.** A national communication studies conference is under way and the mood for some individuals is uneven, fearful and grim because of the 2016 U. S. election results. Among such individuals, three graduate students are sitting on a bench in the hotel lobby. The mood is somber and their bodies are huddled together. All three embody both minority and privileged

statuses with respect to their race, gender, religion and, sexual orientation. One of the persons in this group is a religious minority in the U.S. and is overwhelmed at the prospective bleakness of the political and social landscape. The other people comfort the person as tears collectively infold the group to affect one another in bodily capacity and bear witness to what is beyond anyone's control at the moment. The alterity of this encounter upholds similar viscosities, shapes, and textures of tears: bodies connect to embody the singularity of multiple pains. The two students comforting the third one remark on their queerness and the ironic precarity that all three feel in different aspects of life. Somehow, the mood lightens and there is laughter. The embodied differences of the interlocutors in this encounter expands the communicative moment to make room for uncertainty and anxiety. I am a part of this encounter.

### **SITUATING THE BODY IN THE EVERYDAYNESS OF THE ENCOUNTERS**

If we notice the cognitive attributes of both encounters, we will not find them to be much different from each other. However, if we add the feeling based or extra-cognitive attributes of both encounters, there seems to be a marked difference because the somatic aspect of communication factors into both encounters. Bodies can register the extra-cognitive difference in interactive settings with varying degrees of sensitivity, which makes that discernment tricky. However, it does open up notions of somatic sensitivity and processual capacity that can help us understand the two encounters. For example, one could say that in encounter one some interlocutors exhibit a card carrying racial hyperawareness in a bid to negate the idea of colorblindness and to humorously display their critical mastery of U.S. race relations. Perhaps the habitual drive to be egalitarian heightens their somatic attention to one aspect of this experience which entails framing an interaction as “a sea of whiteness” or “brown kind.” By the same token,



one could offer that other sensate experiences and exchanges that open up space for alterity, connection, and curiosity become invisible to the encounter. Somehow, habitual similarities of attending to mutual differences alienate the very potential for welcoming differences in the first encounter. Comparatively, in the second encounter interlocutors do not transcend their differences to bear witness to each other's pain and precarity. On the contrary, interlocutors in the second encounter can be said to embody a contrapuntal pace, that is a relational pace in which rhythms of difference are able to create melodic similarities without resolving their counterpoint. In fact, differing yet similar experiences of precarity augment both differences and similarities in what can potentially be embodied cognition. There is an intuitive richness to the second encounter which can be attributed to interlocutors distributing their sensory attention to the whole body instead of fixating on a relatively narrow and solely intellectual frame of experience. The questions that need to be asked for such encounters are: When experiencing racial hypervigilance or collective precarity, what does the body experience in terms of feelings? Why and how are those feelings not merely rationalistic but linked directly to the body's different movements? For example, does someone's mouth dry up a little as they feel their heart race and prickly anxiety shoot up their spines when another person offers a self-deprecating account of their own racial privilege or oppression or hail another person through a similar category? Does someone feel their bodies feeling relaxed at being able to experience solidarity when they claim a minority status? Does someone feel invisible and reduced to an essentialist and socio-cultural category? What does it mean for one body to share that moment of anxiety with another and what transpires within the relationality? Is this hypothetical anecdote an everyday habit of communication for some or an episodic experience for others? What is the difference between awareness and hyperawareness,

intuitive embodiment and cognition? What makes for a democratic habit of engaging with the social?

There is no one way to pin point the answer and perhaps that is not even the point. Nonetheless, what I consider potentially reductive and expansive *forms of* experience (with obvious overlaps on account of experiential subjectivity) in two such mundane conversations respectively can significantly influence the pattern of continuing encounters among bodies, spaces, living and technological forms of experience. For Barry Brummett, such ways of responding to situations categorize discourses. Brummett notes: “For instance, suppose a person lives with an inchoate fear of foreign enemies and threats from abroad. There are discourses (or stock ways of speaking and thinking) to which this person may respond that will give form to feeling, that frame those difficulties as ‘the Communist Threat,’ that will cast widely dispersed events into coherent dramatic or narrative structures of threat and response.”<sup>1</sup> In the hope of making room for the somatically predisposed extra-cognitive refrains in the symbolic milieu of communication, I suggest that these discursive or stock expressions include embodied habits which are both discursive and non-discursive. We apprehend social encounters and respond to them in the ways we do, based on bodily habits. Similarly, certain forms of experiences shape corresponding feelings and habits of responding to further experiences. Habits are relational interchanges which is why the reductive form of experience I noted in my example is a pattern that helps shape certain unpleasant emotional exchanges in a group: anxiety, distress, joy and/or dread. Brummett notes that the discourses are rhetorical since the notion of responding to a context is “never neutral, disinterested, or unmotivated.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, I propose that habits are rhetorical since they are

---

<sup>1</sup> Barry Brummett, *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Brummett, *Contemporary*, 20.

embodied means, or based on the remarks of American pragmatist John Dewey, a moralistic-somatic “refracting medium,” of relating to another.<sup>3</sup> Like a chemical “reagent which adds new qualities and rearranges what it receives,” a habit receives, rearranges, filters, and gives form to the multiplicity of feelings one can engender for the self, and the other in discursive and non-discursive exchanges.<sup>4</sup> Yet, habits can be largely unconscious especially when one does not pay attention to the bodily experiences in habituated responses to situations and contexts.<sup>5</sup> This is why a lack of attention to the body in communicative exchanges can transpire reductive forms of experiences that alienate the potential for relation.

My speculations and examples invite observation and undoing of phenomena that happen so habitually that it is easy to be desensitized to their long term impact on bodies, communities, and their relationships. I wonder why some or most communicative encounters lose sight of conversations’ aesthetic and affective—that which minds the body’s productive capacity for all kinds of pleasant and unpleasant somatic experiences—richness. For example in encounter one, race works as an everyday habit of embodiment and expression that invites speculative reconstruction.<sup>6</sup> From one perspective, the example I proposed seems to be a self-conscious and racially sensitive approach to acknowledging socially ascribed differences that politically correct experiences and language tend to sweep under the rug. From another perspective though, the encounter risks becoming color bound, color bland and perhaps color blanched. It is almost as if uttering a word of color frees one from the responsibility of attending, of listening deeply to the

---

<sup>3</sup> John Dewey, “Human Nature and Conduct,” in vol. 14 of *The Middle Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 26.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Terrance MacMullan, *Habits of Whiteness: A Pragmatist Reconstruction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1.

bodily implications of verbal articulations of the self and the other. It is almost as if words do not have bodies that breathe in air or risk asphyxiation. As Lisbeth Lipari writes in relation to her ethics of listening and the embodied practice of listening otherwise, listening as if one's body were one big ear, being open and attuned to minute sounds of major differences can help us focus on major similarities.<sup>7</sup> In the context of everyday experiences, encounters that produce reductive forms of experience as I discussed earlier act as sensory prophylactics which prevent one from apprehending expansive experiences in which bodies and ecologies can bear witness to capacious and democratic forms of compassion, kindness and a co-presence of vulnerability.<sup>8</sup> Our encounters fail to register the quotidian relays among each other as relational forces in which bodies prior to/alongside their symbolization, and reduction to a single attribute of a wide intersectional play of signification chains, still affect each other as life-affirming forces.

By life-affirming, I mean forces that have the somatically attuned capacity to register contrapuntal anxieties of feeling precarious and safe together (as in encounter two) just as much they have the power to alienate, minimize, reduce, and erase the productivity of differences. In fact, life-affirming forces as understood further with a Nietzschean inflection are "Dionysian" in that they relate to the whole of life: "Life itself. Its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilation."<sup>9</sup> Such forces flow as the currents of vitality themselves, and cannot be compartmentalized or denied, but must be willed and affirmed in all their tranquil and turbulent forms.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of how one approaches the affirmation of life, and

---

<sup>7</sup> Lisbeth Lipari. *Listening, Thinking, Being: Toward an Ethics of Attunement* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Collins, *Intellectual*, xx.

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Will to Power* (United States: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2014), location 12110, Kindle.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

the multiple perspectives one can potentially adopt to apprehend the complexity of the opening encounters, I will outline, develop and examine such situations as ordinary, somatically attuned or negligent and habit-driven performances/processes of *quotidian rhetoric*. I will break down this large concept through a roadmap that outlines the chapters for my dissertation without ignoring the detours and impasses that this project will necessarily encounter in its journey. Following the roadmap, the last section of this introduction signs off on the pragmatic import of quotidian rhetoric entailing the ethical performance, practice, and processes of paying attention to the *sentience* of the world with all forms of living and dying.

## **ROADMAP OF QUOTIDIAN RHETORIC**

To conceptualize the details of quotidian rhetoric, I first need to connect the two interdisciplinary frameworks of American pragmatist John Dewey's aesthetic theory from the 1930s and contemporary affect theory guiding my work. There is a historical narrative embedded in this less than perfect but organic/rhizomatic/subterranean union (without unicity), which I need to flesh out to justify why two somatic approaches to the everyday and the ordinary, so far apart in time make dialogical sense in the twenty-first century. Specifically, chapter one attempts to emplace Deweyan aesthetics as a historically misplaced thread in the field of communication that re-configures the importance of the body in everyday rhetoric. After providing the necessary historical context for why I approach quotidian rhetoric the way I do, I also differentiate quotidian rhetoric from extant cognate theories of social style (Barry Brummett) and vernacular rhetoric (Gerard Hauser), while justifying why my scholarly focus bears implications for the field of communication. I follow the theoretical range of my work by briefly introducing the theoretical frameworks of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory including common and contrasting key terms

such as rhythm and habit. These somatic theories help me highlight the rhetorical role of the body and its habits in communicative practices but do not limit my work to the rhetorics of the body/soma.

In chapter two, I discuss the aesthetic dimensions of everyday experience including how rhetoricians have engaged with Deweyan aesthetics. Simultaneously, I consider a more current development in the humanities that features rhetorical scholarship based on the body. This is the field of affect studies that discusses the importance of the body, its movements, stases, rhythms, distortions and undulations akin to Deweyan pragmatism, but differs on the linearity, directionality and/or systematicity that pragmatists would ascribe to an experience. This particular field also gives us what I consider an extra-cognitive or non-rational resource for understanding unorganized emotions or bodily sensations that are called affects. The field is particularly helpful in opening up rhetorical discourse on the importance of negative affects, such as anxiety, distress, disgust etc. which impact everyday communication. Dewey's idealism in his notion of aesthetic experiences tends to iron out unpleasant folds and wrinkles in everyday experiences. Chapter two also charts out rhetoric's existing engagement with thinkers of affect theories to reconsider some of the ways of addressing the body in conversation with communication. At the same time, I am able to point how theories of affect can be more attuned to democracy building endeavors that welcome both constructive and destructive rhythms of everyday communication.

Chapter three extends chapters one and two by setting the stage for quotidian rhetoric, its inter-connected theoretical frameworks, and their points of consent and dissent. The staging is an *impasse* whose aim is not necessarily resolution, but a formal transformation, as a result of a force encounter between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. Chapter three starts with an impasse

between two diverse fields that encourage a focus on the body, but have such radically different approaches to utilizing somatic vitality. The first section of chapter three underscores how these two diverse, yet similar orientations of somatic theories converse, interlock, oppose, sustain and transform each other to help readers discover new scholarship on habits of everyday communication, the body, its affects, and the possibility of aesthetic experiences in the quotidian. The second section of chapter three unpacks the conceptual impasse through theoretical and field based interchanges, taking place around two prominent nodes of the food truck culture in Austin, Texas, which functions as my text and field of investigation. One node covers primary food truck hubs in Austin in popular areas of Downtown Austin (Rainey Street), and food-identity particular areas such as the North Loop vegan food truck cluster. Since temporality is an important dimension governing the foot-traffic of food truck spaces, the food truck clusters of South Austin Trailer Park and East Austin's Pangea lounge contextualize the quotidian rhetoric around Austin's food truck culture by serving as empty texts. The second food truck node pertains to Austin's annually celebrated South by South West music, film, technology, and interactive media festival, within which I observe the ordinary life-affirming rhythms of production and consumption at its SouthBites® food trailer park.

Owing to the relational and experiential focus of my project a field based supplement to rhetorical analysis of texts helps discover what McKinnon, Asen, Chávez, and Howard consider “new or complementary answers to methodological questions about text, context, audience, judgment, and ethics.”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, an accountability to my own feelings/affective states, habits and bodily comportments in experiencing the food truck “text and context” marks me as what

---

<sup>11</sup> Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez and Robert G. Howard, eds., *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016), 3.

Jamie Landau calls a “feeling rhetorical critic,” and shapes the ethical scope of my work.<sup>12</sup> My gustatory field is a confluence of encounters and “discursive practices” through which quotidian rhetoric “is produced, where it is enacted, where it circulates, and, consequently where it is audience” among bodies and ecologies.”<sup>13</sup> A field-based approach that is attuned to these “methodological topoi” and potential nodes of textual, contextual, audience-driven, judgment-based, and ethical experiences, emplaces the body in the everyday rhetoric of Austin’s food truck environment.<sup>14</sup> A field-based approach unpacks the inter-disciplinary conversation between pragmatist aesthetics and affect theory.

Chapter four contextualizes the realizations of my analyses based on the rhetorical fieldwork in chapter three, by examining a prominent media representation of the food truck culture in the North American market, *The Food Network’s The Great Food Truck Race: The Family Face-Off*. I supplement my field work with a culinary-themed media representation, to differentiate the aesthetic and affective registers of embodied research in the field, and a televised representation of a well-bound and manicured media artifact. In my media analysis, I follow the same five-fold methodology (text, context, audience, judgment, and ethics) from chapter three to map the somatic influence of habits on aesthetic experiences, everyday affects, routines, and life-affirming rhythms of everyday rhetoric vis-à-vis my media artifact. In other words, chapter four provides the application base for the questions I have posed in the introductory chapters in relation to embodied communication, and democracy building practices. The application helps me argue

---

<sup>12</sup> Jamie Landau, “Feeling Rhetorical Critics: Another Affective-Emotional Field Method for Rhetorical Studies,” in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, ed. Sara L. McKinnon et al. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016), 73; *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Sara L. McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 4-8.

<sup>14</sup> Sara L. McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 3.



how bodies and ecologies communicate, habitually and processually in televised representations of food consumption/production, which may be considered immersive. These activities, encounters, and experiences include but are not limited to conversational styles (dialogue involving a mutual interchange of speaking and listening in street food shows) and physical modes of embodied attention (walking, modes of playing, and/or interacting with other forms of living—pets, animals, technology—in a food truck environment). Chapter four fleshes out the representational indices, within which the food truck culture thrives in the North American media market, the audience it entertains, the judgment that it requires from its observer (me in relation with the audience), and the ethical implications of bearing witness to the quotidian rhetoric of such rhetorical encounters. With the help of chapters three and four, I wish to discuss how the body factors into everyday rhetoric and at what points it is elided. A rhetorical analysis of a major media representation further highlights the theoretical impasse from chapter three. Theory and application help underscore, that the aesthetic and affective irresolution of somatic experiences in quotidian rhetoric is precisely the condition of their possibility.

Despite being the last chapter of my work on quotidian rhetoric, chapter five is not a culmination or a resolution of differences, which have generated from the impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. Instead, the chapter acts as a transformational bloomspace for a *collaborative oddity* between the inter-disciplinary bodies in my work. In the chapter, I evince how the impasse between these two bodies, on account of their playful deadlock, and loss of self, through their haptic contact with mutual alterity, transforms into what I consider an artful rhizome. The impasse-as-artful rhizome is a quotidian yet unique queer alliance of aesthetic and affective experiences. Consequently, I lay out the implications of what it means for the impasse to transform

into artful rhizome. To do that, I re-trace my steps to Dewey and draw out major notions of artfulness from his theory of aesthetics, while enunciating the rhizomatic and non-conforming aspect based on Deleuze and Guattari's geo-political philosophy of the rhizome. From a more abstract space, I then move on to enunciating the implications of the impasse-as-artful rhizome for rhetorical engagements with pragmatist/Deweyan aesthetics and affect. I particularly emphasize the pragmatic need to recalibrate Deweyan aesthetics, to address the cosmopolitan rhythms of the twenty-first century, through a serious attention to negative affects in aesthetic experiences. With the help of this artful and rhizomatic queer alliance between Deweyan aesthetic and affect, the disembodied ideal of the well-adjusted personality in the history of rhetoric and communication can be repaired ethically. My suggestion for the repair comes by way of what I consider the pursuit of the wellness-attuned personality, which is both logically and emotionally aware of its environment, less attuned to mastery through speech, and more attuned to the practice of embodied relationality. My next set of implications pertain to what the artful rhizome means for rhetorical field methods, how it borrows from the existing and extremely helpful work of rhetorical field scholars. Specifically, I evince how my performative writing, embodied ethic of creeping persistence and navigation in the field through detours in an aesthetic and affective enrichment of rhetorical field methods. I also add an embodied particularity to the general corpus of embodied research, by proposing the idea of a feet-first attitude and orientation in embodied research, which challenges the cognitive verticality of Western metaphysics, through an attunement with the lowest part of one's body. Notwithstanding the ableist premise of my embodied particularity, I believe that my research attitude demonstrates the aesthetic, anesthetic, and affective successes and pitfalls of the approach. My embodied particularity in fieldwork shapes an otherwise diffuse somatic

methodology for rhetorical field methods. The final section of chapter five sums up the implications by discussing what the artful rhizome means for rhetorical engagements with spaces of everyday rhetoric such as food trucks. Based on my fieldwork and media analysis, I am able to demonstrate how the body can be examined along the artful and rhizomatic indices of habits, rhythms, biosocial paces of experience, everyday affects and emotions, to draw a quotidian rhetoric from the mundane activities of consumption and production. Over all with the help of my entire body of work across the five chapters, I am able to answer the following questions. How does quotidian rhetoric help us fashion democratic means of experiencing everyday life? Why are such habits of communication especially important from the point of view of ethical education in times of political and social turmoil? What is the pragmatic import of and potential oppositions to quotidian rhetoric? What is the pitfall of processual and embodied views of communication? Through the discussion of the aforementioned questions, my hope is to find germinal openings through which the conceptualization and application of quotidian rhetoric may have a heuristic purpose for future pragmatist approaches to rhetoric and affect theory.

With the future of quotidian rhetoric brimming with potential and creative possibilities, I end my introduction by highlighting the pragmatic contribution of and potential oppositions to the examination of quotidian rhetoric. This section underscores the importance of attunement to ordinary contexts, situations and habits of experience from an ethical point of view. Ultimately, the ordinary can be considered as a vital but largely ignored resource for building what I have earlier described as democratic means of experiencing different forms of living and non-living and forging healthy relationships with them.

## **PRAGMATIC IMPORT OF AND POTENTIAL OPPOSITIONS TO QUOTIDIAN**

## RHETORIC

The practical, and existential significance of quotidian but highly powerful experiential rhythms is their *orientation toward forging an attuned body with one's sentience*.<sup>15</sup> The sentient quality of our experiential rhythms encapsulates their embodiment of both firm grounds and precarious waters of existence. By practicing bearing witness to different bodily comportments that arise from the ebbs and flows of experience and learning to discern the different positive, negative, ambivalent and indeterminate meanings one ascribes to the same, the ordinary and everyday can be powerful repositories of engaging more sentiently with all kinds of life-affirming rhythms.

Of course, the sort of self-fashioned and self-determining attunements that potentially promise one a richer (felt) access to lived experiences work to benefit a neoliberal system that emplace the responsibility of seeking out such experiences on the individual.<sup>16</sup> The same system co-opts the realm of affective and aesthetic experiences to fuel profit making endeavors despite Dewey's claims that one need not travel the ends of the earth to have an experience. Instead of denying the subtle, but very real powers of a larger system or fervently hoping that one could thwart its exploitativeness, and/or radically transform it inside-out in their life span, one begins—as Barbara Biesecker in agreement with Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida—wherever they are by admitting power relations at work.<sup>17</sup> One begins wherever they are by acting anyway—even if it means painfully labored breathing in a depressive state on a given day or no movement at all—

---

<sup>15</sup> Hélène Cixous and Mireille Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 18.

<sup>16</sup> Davi Thornton, "Transformations of the Ideal mother: The Story of Mommy Economicus and her Amazing Brain," *Women's Studies in Communication* 37 (2014): 272.

<sup>17</sup> Barbara A. Biesecker, "Towards a Transactional View of Rhetorical and Feminist theory: Rereading Hélène Cixous's *The Laugh of the Medusa*," *The Southern Communication Journal* 57 (1992): 86.

as hospitable gestures of resistive affirmation. Those affirmative acts of resistance include expanding one's notions of what it might mean to act at all. They involve a sustained practice of re-directing attention to all the pleasant and unpleasant (destructive) affects one experiences on a bodily level when interacting with other bodies in any given space. In fact, the promise of aesthetic experiences could be more meaningful especially when there is a breakdown in the scripted narrative of courage, empowerment and self-determination and all the fiery affects that keep one persisting, cool down, sediment and fizzle out in the face of failure and rejection.<sup>18</sup> What new subjective spaces of experience do such "politically ambiguous" affective and aesthetic encounters engender in ordinary lives?<sup>19</sup>

The answer is perhaps an attunement to the sentience of our constructive and destructive life-affirming rhythms in day-to-day experiences in living and non-living ecologies. The hopeful question is to wonder what difference this simple habit of attunement can bring about in the articulation of quotidian rhetoric, its patterns, structures, and performances of experience that the rhythms engender. How we speak, listen, dress, walk, eat, move, dance, play, read and write (among infinite others) are all impacted heavily by the sort of potential attention one can bring to body and mind in unison. The burning question then is: what stops us from the simplicity of re-directing attention to the body and mind in conjunction and disjunction? In this work, I not only focus on what these quotidian experiences of traversing the ordinary look like, but also explore potential impediments to their actualization in lived life. In other words, I propose a somatically-oriented study of quotidian rhetoric that emerges from habitual, and sentient (both cognitive and

---

<sup>18</sup> Marnie Ritchie, "Becoming Discouraged: Affect and the Rhetorical Production of Negative Emotion in Therapeutic Unemployment Discourses" (Master's Thesis, Syracuse University, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-21.

extra-cognitive) modes of engaging with the world.

## **Chapter 1: The Body in the Field: Its Presence, Eclipse, and Resurgence (1915-1945 and 2000-Present)**

The first chapter of this project frames the academic call to investigate embodied communicative habits unfolding in ordinary processes and everyday contexts, which I introduce as “quotidian rhetoric.” American pragmatist John Dewey’s aesthetic theory and contemporary affect theory serve as my inter-disciplinary frameworks for developing the idea behind quotidian rhetoric. Before approaching the concept itself, I need to lay some disciplinary ground work for why I approach quotidian rhetoric the way I do. What is my motivation to re-connect an old tradition in the history of communication and rhetoric to a contemporary one? My motivation stems from a story that recounts communication’s convoluted relationship with the body.<sup>20</sup> For the field that once called itself “speech,” this narrative accounts for a perceived somatic gap and an intra-disciplinary disconnect approximately over the last 65 years of scholarly work. In charting the body’s rise and fall in the field, I recover a lost thread in the history of rhetoric and communication studies from the early 1930s, a corpus of work which was somatically sensitive and vibrant (John Dewey’s *Art as Experience* and Kenneth Burke’s *Counter Statement*). However, owing to the changing political and educational milieus in the World War II era (post-1945) in which instrumentality, scientific rationality, and distrust of feeling-based or somatic approaches to communication became dominant, a scholarly attention to the body writ large lost steam. I agree with Gunn on his observation that “sensation got yoked to the traumas of World War II,” which is why the discipline came to distance itself from the dirty forces of feelings and affects, and their

---

<sup>20</sup> I start with the generic term “communication” to discuss the scope of the body in the field. As the field grows, matures, and forms more prominent sub-fields of study, I utilize the term rhetoric or rhetorical studies to identify my work with it, and investigate the body’s role in this sub-field of communication discipline writ large.

perceived tendency to soil the body (academic and otherwise).<sup>21</sup> The interesting and unfortunate trend, however, has roots in the field's nascent years between 1915-1945, during which time "the foundations of the discipline were laid, and for good or ill, many persistent characteristics of the discipline were established."<sup>22</sup> I start with this particular time period in my attempts at a discipline-wide somatic recovery.

As part of my work, I re-direct attention to the American pragmatist tradition and particularly John Dewey's notion of aesthetic experiences, which features optimally paced interchanges among bodies and environments, and a mindful engagement with one's surroundings resulting in everyday accounts of community-oriented communication and praxis. Contemporary pragmatist philosopher Richard Shusterman extends Deweyan aesthetics to conceptualize the idea of *pragmatist aesthetics*, whose prime notion of *somaesthetics*, champions the body's vitality in augmenting the sensory potential of everyday experiences. The American pragmatists, in general, give us a wonderful resource that champions the body's role in sensory apprehension. Yet, they focus more on the aesthetic aspect of this apprehension, while not attending enough to the communicative and rhetorical role of somatic habits in everyday communication. Similarly, rhetorical scholars that engage with Deweyan pragmatist focus more on the habitual and aesthetic aspect of everyday communication, which is definitely a nod to the body in their work. Pragmatist rhetoric does not necessarily offer a more in-depth engagement with the body's biosocial pace, which informs and can potentially enrich the study of everyday communication. Overall, my dissertation follows the route of "redemptive research" (Benjamin and McCole as cited in Gunn),

---

<sup>21</sup> Joshua Gunn, "Speech's Sanatorium," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 no. 1 (2015): 20.

<sup>22</sup> Herman Cohen, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945* (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1994), x.



a “deeply rhetorical” craft, because it attempts an ethical repair to the history of the field, by infolding an inter-disciplinary present, into an interlocking body-positive future.<sup>23</sup> The repair begins with this chapter’s attempt to emplace Deweyan aesthetics—a historically frayed thread—in the field of communication, which re-configures the importance of the body in everyday rhetoric. Deweyan aesthetics are not without problem, which is why my work on quotidian rhetoric takes place in an impasse between Dewey’s aesthetic theory and contemporary affect theory. Yet, it is important to point to the places where the body got lost in the history of our field, especially through a return to Dewey. Dewey’s work on aesthetics is one purposive detour, which helps us re-discover this somatic aporia. With the historical runway in sight, the chapter then engages somatic theories for highlighting the rhetorical role of the body and its habits in communicative practices but is not limited to studying rhetorics of the body/soma. This chapter also differentiates quotidian rhetoric from extant cognate theories of social style (Barry Brummett) and vernacular rhetoric (Gerard Hauser), while justifying why my scholarly focus bears implications for the field of communication. Finally, chapter one introduces the spectrum and organization of quotidian rhetoric.

## **THE NOT SO DEWEY-EYED HISTORY OF THE BODY IN THE FIELD**

Before re-tracing historical steps to Dewey’s aesthetic theory, I need to emphasize that among other pragmatists such as William James and aside from Freud, Dewey was already one of the more lasting influences in the field that we now term “communication,” or more formally the

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 21; John McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 249. Walter Benjamin, “The Concept of History,” in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings: Volume Four: 1938–1940*, eds. Marcus Bullock, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard, 2003 [1940]), 392.

National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (NAATPS), as it was called in early twentieth century (1914-1915).<sup>24</sup> Dewey's scientific approach to communication and psychological theories of social adjustment, whose goal was, as Herman Cohen describes the attainment of a "well-adjusted personality," factored heavily into speech's inextricable connection with students' mental health, hygiene, and their overall personality.<sup>25</sup> One of the major figures influencing the early disciplinary image of the field, Charles Woolbert communicates his stolid commitment to the scientific practice of "how speaking is done." Woolbert's scientific bias is hard to ignore when he declares: "The facts we use are too often guesses; our methods are too purely personal; we need to get together on some common acceptable basis. The only one I know comes from scientifically conducted investigation and research."<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Lane acknowledges the intertwined role of emotion and speech, but notes that matters of "mature deliberation," require a civilized graduation from the feeling-based dominance of "childish abandon" in speech to "intellectual conviction."<sup>27</sup> The scientific orientation to public speaking is mark of this mature graduation, a more time appropriate response to the needs of the discipline in the early twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> In the field's desire for scientific rigor, one can already sense the infantilizing compartmentalization of the body in the foundational years of the discipline.

Moreover, the disciplinary disposition at the time was to believe, that poor speech was the result of a mal-adjusted personality with unstable emotions. The scientific practice of mental

---

<sup>24</sup> Pat J. Gehrke and William M. Keith, eds., *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Business* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 5.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 20; Herman Cohen, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945* (Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1994), 119-120.

<sup>26</sup> Charles H. Woolbert, The Problem in Pragmatism, "*Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* 2 no. 3 (1916): 264.

<sup>27</sup> F. H. Lane, "Action and Emotion in Speaking, *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* 2 no. 3 (1916): 228.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

hygiene oriented speech training was an ethical corrective to mal-adjustment. As Pat Gehrke observes, the early years in the history of communication prioritized scientific thinking, while areas such as “ethics, English, and aesthetics,” were merely acknowledged as accessory to speech studies.<sup>29</sup> A foray into the early archives of the field’s history, reveals something interesting about the disciplinary motivation to base speech education on Dewey’s work on social adjustment, but not his aesthetic theory from the 1930s, which stands for a more inclusive upgrade for communication practices based on community, mindful engagement, and the body. I mine this particular disciplinary tendency of somatic compartmentalization—in which one sensory faculty of speech, became dominant at the expense of the whole body—as the lost thread in the history of the field.

**Mental hygiene, Dewey, and adjustment.** Before jumping into how public speaking educators championed speech’s role in students’ mental health, it is important to discuss a few key terms without which the disciplinary argument about speech is impossible. One such term is the notion and practice of *mental hygiene* as it gained ground in early days of public speaking. Mental hygiene is also closely related to Dewey’s work on adjustment that I discuss subsequently. Clifford Beers inaugurated “the mental hygiene movement” in 1921 rooted in his autobiographical work *A Mind that Found Itself* in 1908.<sup>30</sup> Beers described it as the pragmatic practice of attending to mind-related problems associated with lived experience, including inattention to emotional turmoil, psychosomatic afflictions such as sleeplessness, and social delinquencies such as alcoholism or

---

<sup>29</sup> Pat J. Gehrke, *The Ethics and Politics of Speech: Communication and Rhetoric in the Twentieth Century* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009), 18-22.

<sup>30</sup> Clifford Whittingham Beers, *A Mind that found Itself: An Autobiography* (United States: 1908), 295; Clifford Whittingham Beers, *The Mental Hygiene Movement* (United States: 1921), 255.

theft.<sup>31</sup> At this point, Dewey himself is perhaps the best detour to undertake to arrive at the connection between mental hygiene, social adjustment, and speech that the discipline touted as its own existential warrant. I unpack some Deweyan readings of terms whose discussion explains the disciplinary allegiance to particular beliefs and practices around speech in early twentieth century. For instance, Dewey took great care in distinguishing active adjustments from passive ones under the auspices of terms such as *adaptation* and *accommodation* respectively, both of which would have important implications for speech eventually.<sup>32</sup> Active or growth-oriented adjustments can be subsumed under active adaptation through which an organism agentively molds an environment to cater to the former's requirements.<sup>33</sup> On the contrary, accommodation "affects particular modes of conduct, not the entire self," even though it has the general tendency to develop into a lifelong habit of fatalism and resignation.<sup>34</sup> It is akin to passive adaptation, through which an organism passively adjusts to or "takes on the coloring of his surroundings" without trying to modify the environment in any capacity.<sup>35</sup> Accommodation is an interesting principle because of its immediate relation with long-term habits (especially those of speech), their early unconscious power on an individual and how both are valuable to education.<sup>36</sup> What I infer from Dewey so far is that growth-oriented adaptations are generally healthy attempts at relating with, minding or modifying an environment in opposition to growth-averse and generally unhealthy accommodations.

The connection of growth and health subsequently has significant bearings for Dewey's

---

<sup>31</sup> Beers, *Mental Hygiene*, 301.

<sup>32</sup> John Dewey, "Contributions to A Cyclopedia of Education Volumes 1 and 2," in vol. 6 of *The Middle Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 360-365.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 365-366.

<sup>34</sup> John Dewey, "A Common Faith," in vol. 9 of *The Later Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 12.

<sup>35</sup> Dewey, "Contributions," 365.

<sup>36</sup> Dewey, "A Common," 12.

idea of social adjustment. In one of his essays that he writes in 1910 and outlines the relation of thought with action (“*How We Think*,” revised edition), Dewey notes the importance of social adjustment with regard to a baby’s somatic development. Dewey traces the developmental process from mere accommodation to a cognitively successful active adaptation over time, particularly in an active relation with persons as objects of great interest.<sup>37</sup> As a fantastic and formal satisfaction of an appetite, speech acts as the tonic, or the home key in this adaptive admixture, a return to which makes clear the Deweyan pattern of thinking. Dewey’s own words herald what would become the disciplinary mantra for early scholars of public speaking:

Speech, the accurate adaptation of sounds heard to the movements of tongue and lips is, however, the great instrument of social adaptation; and with the development of speech (usually in the second year) adaptation of the baby’s activities to and with those of other personas gives the keynote of mental life.<sup>38</sup>

Dewey seems to suggest that after children have learnt to accommodate their bodies with respect to their environments, their habits of speech must embody more than the principle of accommodation, that is the mere reproduction or assimilation of an unconscious environment. For Dewey, “habits of correct speech” must embody the active principle of adaptation: “...adaptation includes also making over of the environment to meet the new demands on the part of the living individual.”<sup>39</sup> The adaptive stance of speech when incorporated as an active habit that is able to re-frame an environment for its purposes, results in a healthy mental life.

Gunn observes that the Speech departments in early twentieth century yoked Dewey’s approach to social adjustment with “psychical adaptation,” whose union was most palpably manifest in the

---

<sup>37</sup> John Dewey, “How We Think,” in vol. 8 of *The Later Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 282.

<sup>38</sup> Dewey, “How We Think,” 283-284.

<sup>39</sup> Dewey, “Contributions,” 360-361; Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 4.

field's uptake of mental hygiene.<sup>40</sup> I now re-visit some of the foundational views in the field on speech, communication, social adjustment, habits and mental hygiene.

**Further impact of mental hygiene and adjustment on the body.** Over and above a deep desire for establishing mental hygiene as one of the chief goals for speech education (also referred in sum as speech hygiene), the existing historical surveys of the field between 1915 and 1945 reveal some other interesting trends about the body's position in the field. It seems that the discipline viewed the body as a medium that needed to be controlled, self-mastered, and adjusted in conformance with the prescribed mental hygiene and psychiatric norms of the time.<sup>41</sup> For example, Bryng Bryngelson was a prominent supporter of mentally hygienic proper speaking in terms of its social and political benefits including the development of, but not limited to more self-aware, well-rounded, complex free, emotionally "secure" and forthcoming individuals.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, speech was considered one of the prime sensory facilities whose correction and balance in the classroom meant mentally fit, objective, honest, efficacious, ethical, and effective citizens participating in democratic deliberations.<sup>43</sup> This meant that speech training envisioned a model vocal behavior that resulted in a well-adjusted personality who demonstrated the following traits: emotional stability, self-reliance, extraversion, and ability to command, control, and persuade an audience.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, it was not just up to health care practitioners to correct speech imbalances in students. Speech teachers in the classroom (despite vivid critics of the idea) doubled up as speech therapists or "teacher-therapists," once of course, as Wayne L. Morse notes, they had

---

<sup>40</sup> Gunn, "Speech's Sanatorium," 24.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 22-28.

<sup>42</sup> Bryng Bryngelson, "Applying Hygienic Principles to Speech Problems," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 29 (1943): 353; Cohen, *History*, 120.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 22-30.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 28.

demonstrated the merits of a well-adjusted personality: “Another essential in the mental-hygiene approach to speech is the teacher, himself, must be a well-adjusted individual. He must have analyzed his own personality problems before he can help students overcome their emotional disturbances.”<sup>45</sup> Having thus acquired an “objective attitude,” through their “normally adjusted personalities,” the speech masters could identify affective and emotional disturbances in their students, control, and “eliminate those habits of response which produce poor audience adjustment.”<sup>46</sup> Speech teachers could adjust student personalities to transform them, into speakers who had mastered their bodies, through ideal speech making traits.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, speech teaching was not just limited to delivery or presentation. The role of the speech teacher was much more profound than that, particularly pronounced in Morse’s views on speech’s role in overall “personality development:”

I would say that the primary educational value to be found in a beginning course in speech is the *development of behavioral habits* which will enable the student to adjust himself more satisfactorily to his social environment...”<sup>48</sup>

As one can infer, Morse echoes Dewey implicitly, in his support of adjustment (both of the teacher and the student), correct habits of speech, and mental hygiene. Similarly, Earl Emery Fleischmann sings praises to social adjustment, when he deduces speech’s educative, masterful, and skill-driven (“straight thinking”) purpose in shaping the efficacy of human relations:

Speech is the mastery of those skills which make for a more perfect social adjustment in all the human relations of the individual. It is an exercise of control over impulses largely emotional in character, which lead to behavior that creates difficulties for the individual

---

<sup>45</sup> Gunn, *Speech’s Sanatorium*, 23; Wayne L. Morse, “The Mental Hygiene Approach in a Beginning Speech Course,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 14 (1928): 550

<sup>46</sup> Wayne L. Morse, “The Mental Hygiene Approach in a Beginning Speech Course,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 14 (1928): 547-551.

<sup>47</sup> Cohen, *History*, 120.

<sup>48</sup> Morse, “The Mental Hygiene,” 543.

rather than promoting the ends which he wishes to attain.<sup>49</sup>

An attention to speech and the achievement of its straight-thinking mastery with the help of the speech master in the classroom would be the corrective against “sloppy thinking,” which Fleischman considers an imbalance or an aberration swinging between the extremes of rigidity and “slushy sentimentality.”<sup>50</sup> Therefore, for the majority of early practitioners and scholars of speech, social adjustment or adaptation, became the practice of ensuring the overall psychical development of a well-adjusted, emotionally balanced, and “mature” personality.<sup>51</sup> Personality development, in turn, depended on healthy/correct speech habits, which communicated a healthy mental life. Not all of them explicitly mentioned Dewey in their scholarship between 1920-1940s, but Dewey’s influence can be felt sharply in the accounts. What is perhaps one of the more prevailing markers of speech hygiene later in the field between 1930-1945 is the perceived binarization and opposing faculties of feeling/emotion and reason.<sup>52</sup> To add salt to the injurious split, Hitler’s divisive and rising notoriety prior to World War II, debased the emotional aspect of communicative practices even further as rationalistic and reason driven approaches gained normative status in speech scholarship.<sup>53</sup>

## **IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNICATION’S BODY-LOSS AND CONTRADICTIONS WITH PRAGMATISM**

In re-visiting the history of the field between 1915-1945, so far it is evident that Dewey’s work on social adjustment shaped much of speech scholarship on mental health, speech hygiene,

---

<sup>49</sup> Earl Emery Fleischman, “Speech and Progressive Education,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 27 (1941): 513.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 515.

<sup>52</sup> Gehrke, *Ethics*, 30.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 30-31.



and its quest for a normalized well-adjusted personality. We also know that the existing literature on speech hygiene casts a positive light on intellect and negative or less than desirable one on emotion. This disciplinary trend compels rigorous speculation on two very important issues: 1) Granted that speech scholars at the time had persuasive evidence to encourage the uptake of reason based appeals in speech acts, lest the speaker manipulate and exploit peoples' psyche through excessive emotional appeals (akin to Hitler). However, in hoisting logic/reason to the lofty heights that it reached in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, what opportunity cost did the field incur in placing a sensory moratorium on emotion and by extension, the body that feels? Does the moratorium reveal its own kind of disciplinary affect/feeling toward the body and to be more specific, certain kinds of bodies and anatomies? The second issue complicates the picture, but also generates some answers for the first issue. 2) The speech economies in which reason accrued greater value at the expense of emotion remarkably contradicts the general orientation of the classical pragmatists such as James and Dewey who were prominent between the 1870s and the 1930s, along the same time when the field of communication was in its nascence.<sup>54</sup>

James's pioneering work on emotions in 1884 clearly counters the speech economies' privileging of reason alone and questions if such a dualism might even exist at an embodied level. I find it important to quote James to stress the role of embodied cognition, for instance in a bodily act such as speech, of which emotion is an inseparable part:

A purely disembodied human emotion is a nonentity...emotion dissociated from all bodily feeling is inconceivable. The more closely I scrutinize my states, the more persuaded I become, that whatever moods, affections, and passions I have, are in very truth constituted by, and made up of those bodily changes we ordinary call their expression or consequence; and the more it seems to me that if I were to become corporeally anaesthetic, I should be excluded from the life of affections, harsh and tender alike, and drag out an existence of

---

<sup>54</sup> Nancy Frankenberry, "American Pragmatism," Paul, Draper Charles, Taliaferro, & Philip L, Quinn (eds.). *Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2010), 143.

merely cognitive or intellectual form.<sup>55</sup>

If speech in the Deweyan sense is the accurate adaptation of sounds to the movements of tongue and lips, and as a result a bodily (sensory and motor based) expression/feeling/response to an environment, then apropos of Jamesian observations, how is it possibly devoid of emotion or feeling? Even if early speech practitioners refute my charges, by suggesting that they never denied the presence of emotion in speech, but only suggested the control and tempering of its excesses, was their approach necessarily healthy for the entire body?<sup>56</sup> James's notes on the sensory range of the body is remarkable: "Our whole cubic capacity is sensibly alive; and each morsel of it contributes its pulsations of feeling, dim or sharp, pleasant, painful, or dubious to that sense of personality that every one of us unfailingly carries with him. It is surprisingly what gives accent to those complexes of simplicity."<sup>57</sup>

If the field of communication was so taken with James and Dewey, why did it co-opt such an impoverished and coercive view of communication wherein speech became an instrument of control to produce well-adjusted but desiccated (adsorbing the fluidity that emotions may induce in a situation) personalities? What we can infer from James's work on emotions is that the sort of speech economies that dominated the early years of our discipline deliberately induced corporeal anesthesia in the speech curriculum, the result of which was dissociative and numbing for the body that feels. And, perhaps as an ethical gesture of reparation, we can re-visit the pragmatist stance on emotion to enrich our understanding of communication and speech as everyday capacious practices in which the body can be sensibly alive, attuned to its each somatic morsel that pulsates,

---

<sup>55</sup> Carl Georg Lange, William James, and Istar A. Haupt. *The Emotions*. Vol. 1.1 (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins Company, 1922), 18.

<sup>56</sup> James A. Winans, *Public Speaking* (Ithaca: Sewell, 1915), 108.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

feels dimly or sharply, pleasantly, painfully, or dubiously. Nonetheless, the sense of personality that this sensibly alive practice might produce is not necessarily a well-adjusted one, but perhaps a well-hydrated one that gives accent to the complex simplicities of a body-positive and sentient personality.

Along with the Jamesian advocacy of embodied and feeling-positive cognition, the classical pragmatic orientation entails a strong oppositional stance toward rigid binaries between “mind and body, knowledge and action, fact and value, individual and society.”<sup>58</sup> For instance, John Stuhr points out the doctrinal habit of classical pragmatists of challenging and disrupting the propositions of modern philosophy that were dichotomous and divisive. As Stuhr notes, these binaries include but are not necessarily limited to:

percept/concept, reason/will, thought/purpose, intellect/emotion, immediate knowledge/inferential knowledge, mind/matter, appearance/reality, experience, nature, belief/action, theory/practice, facts/values, means/ends, divine/human, self/others, individual/community, and so on.<sup>59</sup>

In response to the classical pragmatists’ oppositional stance against the aforementioned dichotomies, Stuhr explains that the pragmatists agreed to the conceptual difference between the binaries but dismissed the modern claim that such divisions, in fact, accounted for experiences of reality.<sup>60</sup> For the pragmatic doctrines, doing philosophy implies a “practical, critical and reconstructive” attention to lived experience that such dichotomies could usefully help navigate and not foreclose upon it.<sup>61</sup> The pragmatic doctrines espouse what Stuhr classifies as an attitude

---

<sup>58</sup> Peter Simonson, “Varieties of Pragmatism and Communication: Visions and Revisions from Peirce to Peters,” *American Pragmatism and Communication Research*, ed. by David. K. Perry (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1.

<sup>59</sup> John J. Stuhr, ed., *Classical American Philosophy: Essential Readings and Interpretive Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>60</sup> Stuhr, ed., *Classical American Philosophy*, 5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

of “fallibilism” and “pluralism,” both of which pursue the relentless questioning of certainty and validate the existence of all experiences regardless of their singularity.<sup>62</sup>

**Re-tracing steps to Dewey's aesthetic theory.** In order to tackle both issues I posited above, I find it important to re-visit Dewey's work yet another time, but this time focusing on his later work on aesthetic theory in 1934 that not just engages the body but also highlights the importance of emotion in everyday experience. Dewey's own sensitivity to emotion's inextricable relationship with reason is nowhere clearer than in his *Art as Experience (AE)*, through which we learn how Dewey comes to understand an aesthetic experience, an experience that is not just limited to experiencing art in static places. On the contrary aesthetic experiences have everything to do with habits of communication, which engage the body and its senses in their vitality to engage community. In Dewey's own words, there is a fullness to an aesthetic experience or “experience” as he writes in some places in *AE*, which implies “the transformation of interaction [between organism and environment] into participation and communication.”<sup>63</sup>

Dewey cannot imagine a participation in lived experiences that does not engage the senses in high definition, because a sensory neglect in pragmatic or intellectual attention translates into limited and insipid experiences. Dewey notes: “Oppositions of mind and body, soul and matter, spirit and flesh all have their origin, fundamentally, in fear of what life may—bring forth. They are marks of contraction and withdrawal.”<sup>64</sup> If Dewey's statuesque vitality is unquestionable in the history of communication and rhetoric, perhaps an exclusion of his body-positive works from the early chapters of this self-same history suggest fearful marks of contraction, withdrawal, and

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 6; Simonson, “Varieties of Pragmatism and Communication,” 2.

<sup>63</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 22.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 23.

loathing from life itself. As extended support for emotion's inseparability from reason, Dewey further qualifies the integrated attributes of an aesthetic experience.

He notes:

It is not possible to divide in vital experience the practical, emotional, and intellectual from one another and to set the properties of one over against the characteristics of the others. The emotional phase binds parts together into a single whole; "intellectual" simply names the fact that the experience has meaning; "practical" indicates that the organism is interacting with events and objects which surround it.<sup>65</sup>

Emotion is the moving and cementing force. It selects what is congruous and dyes what is selected with its color, thereby giving qualitative unity to materials externally disparate and dissimilar.<sup>66</sup>

Once again, Dewey also demonstrates how it is virtually impossible to withstand the dichotomies between reason and emotion in experience and practice as they do not necessarily map on to reality but are conceptually useful as categories. This is because all parts of an experience, the rational, the emotional and the practical are equally important in rounding out an experience as aesthetic. Furthermore, the emotional quality of an experience that the Enlightenment view and modern philosophy would simply dismiss as misleading passions is indubitably important for pragmatists like Dewey. The emotional is indissolubly wedded to aesthetic perception, as the former's intensity is pervasive in the whole experience and renders it creatively satisfying.<sup>67</sup>

## **MINDING AND MINING THE SOMATIC GAP**

It seems that the disconnect/gap between the field of communication and Dewey's own pragmatic thought can be diagnosed as an observable and harmful neglect that the body faced (along with its sensations encompassing different biological and social rhythms) when it came to

---

<sup>65</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 55.

<sup>66</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 42.

<sup>67</sup> Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, 16.

the discipline in the early twentieth century. It is also tragically ironic that the route to an emotional secure personality came by way of emotional repression in the mental hygiene led speaking practices of the day. I think it is not too outrageous to offer that early speech scholars compartmentalized Dewey's own body of thought to adopt only those theories that privileged speech-oriented rational thinking while ostracizing and repressing other vital parts of his work that continue to contribute to a holistic understanding of education, democracy, communication, and community. Indeed, the speculations that I offer here are part of a larger disciplinary conversation about the history of field in which contemporary rhetoricians and communication scholars have provided more layered evidence for the bodily disconnect with which I charge the field. For instance, in the centenary issue of the National Communication Association, some scholars attempt to trace dominant feelings/affects/emotions of the discipline toward the body, the sensations that the field has felt, not felt, and repressed.

In context, Joshua Gunn and Frank Dance lament the disciplinary implications of name changing, that is moving from "speech" to "communication" later in the twentieth century (1987).<sup>68</sup> They comment on speech's historical association with the feminine body, particularly the name's gendered connotation in the 1980s, inhospitality toward the body, and its affects: all reflecting the inherent misogyny of the discipline, particularly in the post-war era.<sup>69</sup> It can be posited that the eclipsing of speech has dispossessed communication of its bodily existence and resulted in a palpable loss of grounding. In a bid to become more transparent and efficacious, is it possible that as a field we have become more ghostly because of an aversion to the visceral? The

---

<sup>68</sup> Joshua Gunn and Frank E. X. Dance, "The Silencing of Speech in the Late Twentieth Century," in *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Business*, eds. Pat J. Gehrke and William M. Keith (New York: Routledge, 2015), 64-65.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

critiques of contemporary communication/rhetoric scholars collectively unmask the reason-centricity of the discipline in its early days. Charles Morris and Catherine Palczewski observe that rhetoric has been “sexed, gendered, and sexualized” with its roots in Greek history and echoes in Plato’s fear of the body (“somatophobia”).<sup>70</sup> Rhetoric has been associated with seduction and the body and has been derogated as a whore and harlot which explains the embedded misogyny in the field.<sup>71</sup>

Morris and Palczewski invoke rhetoric’s synonymy with the effete and pompous elocutionists or performance artists. Gunn and Dance note how the attempt to scientize the field, to align it with the social sciences in the name of academic rigor was really a drive for the substantive which lamentably implies that any field’s association with the feminine is not considered rigorous enough (also see Michael Burgoon’s popular vitriol against speech and its misogynistic associations with the “feminine or unmanly”).<sup>72</sup> However, if one recalls, even at the time the discipline proudly bore the name speech communication (early speech years and more vehemently in the post-1945), there was a concerted effort on part of speech psychologists to associate the field with objective, well-adjusted, and rationalistic modes of personality development. The disciplinary quest was to ensure that emotion did not diminish the stronghold of intellect/reason in speech practices while at all times keeping a safe distance from the vulgar and excessive methods of the “sensationalists”/elocutionists.<sup>73</sup>

All in all, the body remains a contested site in the history of communication and later

---

<sup>70</sup> Charles E. Morris III and Catherine Helen Palczewski, “Sexing Communication,” in *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Business*, eds. Pat J. Gehrke and William M. Keith (New York: Routledge, 2015), 128; Gunn and Dance, “Silencing of Speech,” 71-75

<sup>71</sup> Morris III and Palczewski, “Sexing Communication,” 129.

<sup>72</sup> Gunn and Dance, “Silencing of Speech,” 71-75.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 65; Gehrke, *Ethics*, 26-31.

rhetorical studies with abundant scope for its recovery from Dewey's aesthetic theory. Of course, when it comes to the question of the range of bodies and their feelings that might be recovered in attunement with more inclusive (non-normative, non-rational, extra-human, queer, disabled, and racially diverse) desires and demands of today's democratic networks, Dewey's work needs pruning and grafting with the help of contemporary rhetorical scholarship engaging affect theory. For example, Dewey connects the habits of correct speech with an active principle of adaptation and mentally unhygienic or unhealthy ones with the unconsciously oriented principle of accommodation.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps, in response to the new demands of a more capacious political global environment, in which the notion of correctness can potentially become a non-secular and divisive instrument of moralistic condescension, Dewey's philosophy needs to be made over or re-framed. It might be helpful to re-read habits of correct speech as Dewey's emphasis on developing mindful habits (something that I point to in more detail later, in connection with his theory of aesthetic experiences) of speech with the potential to be bodily attuned to openness and non-judgment. Mindless habits, on the other hand, can be the unconscious, unreflective and limiting accommodations of a body in relation with its ecology. Indeed, it is bodily impossible to experience absolutes of mindful and mindless habits, since one is most likely to contain a residue of the other. The categories, however, akin to pragmatic thought are helpful for cognitive purposes.

Similarly, the critiques and historical surveys of communication can also serve as a rejoinder to the field that disciplinary feelings/emotions/affects of disgust and hatred whose visceral manifestations range from misogyny, homophobia to denunciation of the female body are not self-sustaining and just repressed one way or another. Sooner or later such feelings would

---

<sup>74</sup> Dewey, "Contributions," 360-361; Dewey, "How We Think," 283-284



surface only for new generations of scholars to mine and expose them which is why feeling different affects/emotions was never more important even from a discipline's perspective. Nonetheless, there is something valuable to be mined from even the stickiest of histories. As far as communication and rhetoric go, the disciplinary trend in the early twentieth century was to communicate that ideal personalities were in alignment with normative psychological behaviors and speech training was an indubitable pathway that adjusted one to that ideal. The question to be asked is if adjustment really helped people communicate effectively and ethically on an interpersonal embodied level or largely with a super-structural ideal based on conformity. For the body to re-gain a more respectable standing in the field of communication, the conceptual orientation of adjustment needs to change. Instead of facing an invisible norm, it needs to face the body of the Other. Adjustment then would not be so much a matter of bodily coercion and control, but a fluid notion of bodily attunement to difference and alterity. From a field's point of view, it does not help to throw the baby out of the bath water, something that Dewey's germinal ideas in the field represent. Perhaps, it might be therapeutic to change the bath water, instead of abandoning the baby altogether. That is, let us problematize the germinal Dewey, and re-read his earlier works more closely. Let us infuse early Dewey with his later work on aesthetics. Finally, let us look for glaring gaps and vital connections with the body instead of letting go of his rich contribution to the discipline.

Now that I have established where the body and its affects/emotions lost and found their way back into the field's history, I can focus on my work on quotidian rhetoric. As I develop this concept in the next few sections, I hope to offer some semblance of ethical reparations to the body in rhetoric and communication. I first discuss briefly how scholars in the recent past have

approached everyday experiences in rhetorical studies. This brief section underscores how quotidian rhetoric may be formally similar and different from existing work. The next section marks off the areas that I will not cover under quotidian rhetoric so that my space of investigation can be feasible in scope. The third section presents the spectrum and layout of quotidian rhetoric in which I introduce the two fields of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory with whose theoretic points and counterpoints, I hope to produce cognitive and extra-cognitive/somatic accounts of rhetorical scholarship. The third section is intricate and has several sub-sections that elaborate on important conceptual pivots of quotidian rhetoric such as Deweyan and affective notions of rhythm (particularly what I define as life-affirming rhythms) and habits (particularly what I consider *rhizomatic* habits) leading up to a processual impasse between the two fields and some semblance of formal similarities and differences between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. I conclude chapter one upon a detailed view of the different detours and impasses that contribute to quotidian rhetoric. Chapter two follows with a discussion on the aesthetic and affective dimensions of experience in pragmatism and rhetoric that essentially helps me address what existing scholarship has to offer us with respect to Dewey and affect theory.

## **QUOTIDIAN RHETORIC AND EXISTING RHETORICAL ACCOUNTS OF EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES**

In the past, Brummett has examined the formal scope and rhetorical import of everyday experiences as they are performed under the rubric of social style. Brummett discusses style as a systemic and perceptual ground of primarily “signs and images” around which sociality and relationality cohere to create, organize, validate and communicate one’s sense of place in a relevant

community.<sup>75</sup> Social style relates broadly to a way of navigating the world and specifically to consumptive choices of language, clothing, music, and food. Social style connects communities while also allowing one to differentiate oneself from a particular group of individuals through their stylistic comportments similar to social style. Similarly, Gerard Hauser has discussed the importance of taking the everydayness of conversations or what he calls “vernacular exchanges” into account when thinking through how public opinion forms in the public sphere based on his experience of modern day Greece’s democracy building practices.<sup>76</sup> With my introductory vignettes, I hope to build on but also differentiate my work from Brummett’s formal foci and Hauser’s nod to the vernacular in their research. I hope to press upon the sensory/somatic pressure points of similar everyday phenomena in rhetorical scholarship with the help of everyday aesthetics and affects. Such everyday phenomena and the feelings that they engender are not eventful enough to count as epochal events that make up broader trends in world history. These mundane formal experiences can be called *quotidian rhetoric*.

In his own research, one of the functions Brummett ascribes to rhetoric is “quotidian,” aside from serving its exigent (crisis-oriented) and implicative functions.<sup>77</sup> As a mid-level function, rhetoric’s quotidianness encompasses popular culture and includes innumerable signs and images that influence the ordinary flows of living in “ongoing, mundane, and nonexigent yet important ways.”<sup>78</sup> For Brummett, the flow of these everyday signs and images negotiates the sensory that is both verbal and non-verbal aspects of experience. Individuals partake of and

---

<sup>75</sup> Barry Brummett, *A Rhetoric of Style* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 43.

<sup>76</sup> Gerard A. Hauser, “Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetorality of Public Opinion,” *Communication Monographs* 65 (1998): 86-87.

<sup>77</sup> Barry Brummett, *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 41-42.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

perform rhetoric's quotidianness when they consume and appropriate relevant signs and images from their environment to continue routines, rhythms, and habits of everyday living. Social style is one such culturally popular appropriation of rhetoric's quotidian function.

My idea of quotidian rhetoric is similar to Brummett's idea of social style insofar as the formality of social experiences goes or Hauser's attention to deliberative everydayness and common/non-rational ways through which public opinion is formed. Where quotidian rhetoric differs from these extant explorations of the day to day is through the former's focus on the somatic aspect of any experience from which emerges a particular stylistic performance. Sure, the performance of style is an embodied process. But, Brummett seems to emphasize the symbolic community of signification that language, clothes, music, and other relevant signs are capable of producing, and proliferating. With quotidian rhetoric, I am interested in studying the symbolic and extra-symbolic community of feelings (cognitively organized as emotions, unorganized as affects, and unavoidably overlapping in experiences), impulses, and bodily responses to environments that often accompany everyday stylistic performances, but are not always reducible to meaning. Furthermore, if social style is related to aestheticization as Brummett writes, I am curious to explore the sensate underbelly, that is pertaining to the touching (haptic), tasting (gustatory), smelling (olfactory), sighting (ocular), and listening (aural) capacity of such aesthetic choices rooted in social style. I am interested in developing a notion of quotidian rhetoric based on different forms of sensory experiences pertaining to everyday situations, as opposed to studying the quotidian as a subset of rhetoric.

The pragmatic tradition, and particularly Dewey's work on *aesthetics* is the sensate keynote

in quotidian rhetoric with a focus on habits of experience. For example, while social style works as an assimilative system of communication, in quotidian rhetoric I veer toward a non-systematic (that is pertaining to flows, folds, forces, and multiplicities) view of communication based on rhetoric's engagement with theories of affect as I will discuss later in this chapter. Not all habits of relating and socializing communicate coherently, and meaningfully. There is distortion, dissipation, excess, and waywardness of communication that affects, and is affected by the unpredictable undulations of everyday experiences. Similarly, Hauser's attempts to enrich public opinion building discourse with vernacular exchanges of socio-political valence resonate with my work. I extend his work by engaging the bodily (that is the aesthetic and affective) aspects of communication through which any public deliberation may take place. Such scholars' groundbreaking work on popular culture, social style, and public deliberation affirms the importance of the quotidian and calls for academic attention because of its widespread influence on the potential immediacy of lived experiences. I investigate the gains and losses of focusing on the experiential multitude of habits and performances, around which everyday communication revolves.

## **WHAT QUOTIDIAN RHETORIC IS NOT**

The study of quotidian rhetoric is unlike the large-scale rhetoric of neatly packaged political speeches, such as in the U.S. presidential debates or the discourse surrounding an elected presidency, that shape a democracy for years to come. A timely example could be the epoch-making 2016 U.S. presidential debates between Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, and Republican nominee, now the 45<sup>th</sup> American president, Donald Trump. These eventful phenomena shape global history in big sweeps with their laudatory rhetorical scale and world-wide socio-political implications. Naturally, the eventfulness of rarefied forms of rhetoric such as presidential

debates makes for a worthy subject of investigation in rhetorical studies and criticism.<sup>79</sup> However, it is not enough to solely explore the cognitive impact of eventful rhetoric on relevant communities, since the sustenance of a democracy is not just an intellectual end point in itself. The part disruptive and smooth sustenance of a democracy is an extra-ordinary process made multiple and possible with everyday means of ordinary bodies navigating the complex tangles of life. The interaction does not just start or stop with humans, but also engages animals, plants, machines, other neuro-hybrid modes, and marginalized modes of living. Pezzullo agrees with the argumentative premise and investigative promise of the ordinary in everyday rhetoric. Writing in response to rhetorical fieldwork which celebrates the importance of similar everyday rhetorics, Pezzullo writes:

As rhetoricians long have argued, democratic imaginaries are nurtured and stifled in spaces not simply involving great speeches by great men or even at great events with great photojournalists on hand...[Instead] public values are negotiated in meaningful ways by a wide range of people, including food justice activists, Occupy protestors in and out of costume, people who have been colonized, artists, the deceased, ravers, climate justice advocates, environmentalists, social networks, those who elect politicians, those who are ill, indigenous people, soldiers, and more....That is, for some of us, fieldwork helps contribute more to our understanding of marginalized and emergent figures or elements by not only studying acts but also reflecting on the power relations that contribute to misrecognition or nascent popularity.<sup>80</sup>

As a result, we do not just live life in speech-to-speech eventful grids that feature only prominent figures in history. We create the democratic imaginaries of ordinary days by commonplace nights, whose public values, remain palpable but unsung. Most of such experiences have extra-cognitive refrains that are quotidian, repetitive, habitual, sometimes lost to translation in language, but rich

---

<sup>79</sup> Aaron Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric," *Communication Studies* 62(2011): 128.

<sup>80</sup> Pheadra C. Pezzullo, "Afterword: Decentralizing and Regenerating the Field," in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Methods* eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma Chávez, and Robert G. Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 184.

in movements, rhythms, and bodily sensations.

For example, in the passing of that pivotal moment when the election results are finally announced, we re-turn to the commonplace where bodies and ecologies register the outcome through the quotidian habits and bodily rhythms that they have cultivated over time. It is with these ordinary and habitual dispositions that one experiences the currency, recency, and aftermath of epochal rhetorical phenomena happening in longer time differentials. As the American democracy unfolds under a new leadership in the next four years, there will be countless communicative encounters among bodies and ecologies that recharge and sustain the messy processes of living. These quotidian habits, for instance, help negotiate what for some is a failed rhetorical moment in the U.S. democracy. Similarly, a more poignant example of quotidian habits could actually include a post-inauguration day-to-day investigation of Trump's communicative habits, and pace of communication through the mass media. For example, American news media such as *Huffington Post* and *The New York Times* reflect on Trump's "140-character habit" or "twitter habit" with respect to his daily engagement with social media sites such as Twitter. Through Twitter, Trump shares the unwieldy scope of his presidency, policy executions, and new bureaucratic experiences albeit on an everyday and ordinary scale.<sup>81</sup> And even though the scale of the tweet is limited to 140 characters, we still glean insights into how Trump's communicative habits destabilize the White House's spokesperson's daily patterns of communication with the masses. We can learn how those 140 characters can potentially undermine national security because of his habitual usage

---

<sup>81</sup> Shirish D  te, "Donald Trump's Voter Fraud Fixation Offers Window into Governing Via Twitter," *Huffington Post*, January 26, 2017, accessed January 26, 2017, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-twitter-voter-fraud\\_us\\_58890fc6e4b0024605fd8852?dmhhynx74fqayvi&](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-twitter-voter-fraud_us_58890fc6e4b0024605fd8852?dmhhynx74fqayvi&); Cecilia Kang, "That Old Phone Trump Uses for Twitter could be an Opening to Security Threats," *The New York Times*, January 25, 2017, accessed January 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/25/technology/donald-trump-phone-social-media-security.html>.

of a personal phone that is susceptible to hacking.<sup>82</sup> On the side of the global audiences intercepting his messages, we are exposed to bodies having visceral reactions to Trump's engagement with the world. That is, for example, through Trump's 140 characters, bodies and ecologies including Trump can experience a touch of disgust/relief, a taste of anxiety/apathy, a vision of pride/shame, a sound of joy/anger, or a smell of fear/courage, all of which index the presence of life-affirming rhythms. Overall, we learn how Trump's quotidian rhetoric impacts the scope, immediacy, tone, and urgency of larger discourses and policies around one democracy affecting several democracies on a global level.

Regardless of what the election results and the ensuing democracy sustaining endeavors mean in the current political moment in the U.S., I offer that rhetorical scholars cannot bypass small scaled events in the anticipation of yet another rare event. If we bypass ordinary contexts of communication, we have to ask what we miss in ignoring the sensory, and bodily knowledges along with the emotional landscapes they are capable of producing. Rhetorical scholars may produce more enriching accounts of rhetorical theory with a lively attention to the bodily and ecological moods, feelings, emotions, and affects of a communicative context along with its pragmatic efficacy. Such communicative contexts may not be epochal but they are certainly rhetorical in terms of their formal patterns and sense-based registers that infuse the experience of living quite subtly. Hence the very quotidian-ness of quotidian rhetoric affects the quality and immediacy of living as a continuing and largely messy process with definite room for order and organization. Since, my study of quotidian rhetoric differs from other theorizations of everyday rhetoric (e.g. social style, vernacular rhetoric) and other eventful rhetorics, I will utilize this express

---

<sup>82</sup> Dáte, "Donald Trump's Voter Fraud," *Huffington Post*; Kang, "That Old Phone," *The New York Times*.



difference in the following section to establish how inter-disciplinary encounters between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory articulate quotidian rhetoric to enrich rhetorical theory.

## **THE SPECTRUM AND ORGANIZATION OF QUOTIDIAN RHETORIC**

In the study of quotidian rhetoric, my focus is on mundane experiential contexts of communicative exchanges among bodies and ecologies in a democracy. Instead of just focusing on language use which has traditionally been the realm of rhetoric, quotidian rhetoric focuses on those extra-cognitive refrains that is largely underexplored routines, habits, means, and bodily rhythms that affect and are affected by how we interact with the processes of living. Such experiences range from but are not limited to ordinary conversations at a get-together, the same old commute to work, a walk to a coffee shop, an unarticulated glance shared with a pet, a nervous darting of eyes in front of someone familiar, a punctuating nostalgic feeling about a past technology/gadget, a moment of intense attachment shared with a pet or plant, or an uncertain moment shared between two strangers on a bus. The point behind quotidian rhetoric is that it champions an embodied, and *processual* attention to the cognitive and somatic/extra-cognitive refrains of communication in the democratic commonplace. All of the aforementioned experiences have communicative potential and can be considered raw material for quotidian rhetoric.

I emphasize communicative potential because not every interchange is articulated, labeled, and valued in symbolic terms but just passes as an exchange, all too fleeting to register in language. Yet, the body experiences, and registers the impacts of these extra-symbolic interchanges, and can attend to the sensations as form/pattern building experiences for quotidian rhetoric. Consequently, my work attends to the cognitive and extra-cognitive qualities of experiential relations. It provides the communicative bridge to bring the diverse disciplines of affect studies, and pragmatism in

conversation since both fields return to the body to build sensate theories of everyday experiences. Through quotidian rhetoric, I flesh out the rhetorical implications of sensory experiences underlying aesthetics and affects.

**Aesthetic experiences, and affects: A brief introduction.** Since I focus on the everyday and the ordinary in this proposal, I turn to the Deweyan notion of aesthetic experiences. Dewey's work on art and the aesthetic accounts for why ordinary experiences matter as a field of investigation and inform quotidian rhetoric. Dewey's pragmatic approach to aesthetic experiences challenges first of all the foundational "museum conception of art," which based a conception of art as something far removed from the everyday and the ordinary.<sup>83</sup> Richard Shusterman explains Dewey's orientation to re-habilitating the everyday and the ordinary as integral roots of lived experience as "somatic naturalism."<sup>84</sup> By this term, Shusterman implies that for Dewey, aesthetics are grounded biologically (mental and somatic), and attend first and foremost to "the natural needs, constitution, and activities of the human organism."<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, since Deweyan aesthetics subscribe to somatic naturalism, they are formal in nature.<sup>86</sup> They come to life in certain patterns of experience, follow rhythmic intensities, ebbs, flows, systoles and diastoles, inaugurations and consummations, all of which contribute to, and round out the emotional unity of the aesthetic for Dewey. That is to say that for Dewey, theories of aesthetic appreciation first require a firm grounding in lived experience that integrates one's appreciation, perception, and enjoyment of art. The integration embodies qualitatively rich ordinary experiences that flow from one to another in

---

<sup>83</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Richard, Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 6.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

linkages and are based on everyday *habits of attention, practices and/or orientations*. In Scott Stroud's interpretation, an aesthetic experience in Deweyan pragmatism has three components: "it is both integrated and demarcated from surrounding experiences, it has a unique individualizing quality, and it possesses a sort of meaningful unity among its parts."<sup>87</sup> Dewey's own theory of aesthetics embodies the possibility of moving toward an engaged perception of art/life as an ongoing, and open-ended human experience punctuated with necessary pauses, rests, and a sense of consummation as opposed to stasis or culmination. His theory also explains the notion of rhythm, which is a satisfying pace of relation and experience with other relevant environments, that makes the aesthetic experience possible.

Similarly, another body of thinkers that encourages a return to exploring the movements of the body (particularly negative feelings) in ordinary and everyday settings is affect studies. While Deweyan aesthetics is committed to rounded out, and consummated experiences, affect theory focuses on inchoate, and fragmentary experiences that oppose notions of wholeness, symmetry, and homogeneity of any sort. Affect is predominantly a somatic force of action, inaction, sensation, impulsion, and movement prior to, and alongside symbolic articulation as emotion that can be both progressive and regressive depending on how bodies orient themselves to the said movements. For example, Marta Figlerowicz finds "therapeutic value" in what can be affect's deterring orientation especially if it encourages a disciplinary recognition of typically chastised, and socially disenfranchised bad/ugly feelings such as "shame, sadness, or loneliness."<sup>88</sup> Affect is an enfoldment of the outside, especially through the works of thinkers that resist any rigid categories

---

<sup>87</sup> Scott R. Stroud, "Orientational Meliorism, Pragmatist Aesthetics, and the "Bhagavad Gita"," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 43 (2009): 4.

<sup>88</sup> Marta Figlerowicz, "Affect Theory Dossier: An Introduction," *Qui Parle*, 20 (2012): 3.

between inside and outside, actual and virtual (dreamlike). Brian Massumi brings affect into the fold of theoretical humanities through continental thought, particularly the work of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari who posit affect as an immanent passing relation or relay from “the experiential state of one body to another,”<sup>89</sup> equally capable of affecting each other’s capacity or orientation toward action or inaction that contributes to body and world making/undoing in an ongoing relation.

Massumi further equates intensity with affect, the former an important concept that extrudes the ever-shifting dimensions of conceptual affect. He defines intensity as emergent tendencies of “action and expression,” openings of the past into a future whose present is not-yet, more importantly in the sense that intensity is not reducible to the symbolic structure of language or meaning in affect, which is also what distinguishes affect from emotion.<sup>90</sup> As Massumi writes, emotion is what one feels after the fact, once it has been named, owned and recognized by linguistic structures. Affect on the other hand and differentiated from emotion is unmoored, and unhinged from articulation, owing to its largely somatic, and “autonomic nature,” its propensity as always being in potential, as a dawning tendency that explodes the tenets of linear time by becoming itself “for-now,” and still open to the “not-yet.”<sup>91</sup>

Both of these fields of study urge an embodied attention to rhythms or biological and socio-cultural paces of everyday experiences albeit with varying ontological commitments. Together aesthetics, and affects help me explore a new account of rhetoric (language, words,

---

<sup>89</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), xvi; Brian Massumi, trans. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1988), xvi.

<sup>90</sup> Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” *Cultural Critique*, 31(Autumn, 1995): 88-91.

<sup>91</sup> Massumi, “Autonomy,” 89; Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 12.

expressions, rhythms, sensations, discursive and non-discursive habits) that questions how we pattern, structure, formalize, and attribute motives to our own and the lifeworlds of others. Some potential answers may be found in what I am terming quotidian rhetoric, that emerges from an impasse of aesthetic experiences with affective encounters as I explore in my work.

Upon the discussion of the spectrum and layout of quotidian rhetoric, I now take up the general idea of rhythms in the section on the meaning of rhythms in quotidian rhetoric. I follow this discussion with a sub-section on what I consider life-affirming rhythms with respect to everyday rhetoric. Since rhythms are intricately bound up with the notion of habit, in the same sub-section I approach habits from both a Deweyan (pragmatist) view point and sound a new idea of habits based on affect theorists, particularly Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari's concept of the *rhizome*. Deleuze and Guattari draw inspiration from plants with subterranean roots such as ginger, turmeric, tubers, and burrowing animals such as rats, that proliferate as anti-hierarchical, non-directional, and laterally growing networks of creative, and destructive force encounters, to describe the rhizome.<sup>92</sup> Based on the rhizome's non-conformity to linear hierarchies and vertical thought systems, I discuss what might be called rhizomatic habits of experience. In this sub-section, rhizomatic habits also encounter Deweyan habits to contest, transform, and create new spaces of reflection for quotidian rhetoric.

---

<sup>92</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988).

## THE MEANING OF RHYTHMS IN QUOTIDIAN RHETORIC

Meter is dogmatic; but rhythm is critical;  
it ties together critical moments,  
or ties itself together in passing from one milieu to another.<sup>93</sup>

A sustained attention to the sensory experiences of the body is conceptually key to quotidian rhetoric, which is why the notion of rhythm becomes closely associated with the concept as well. An attention to rhythm or a satisfying pace of experience through the body-mind as a key site of ordinary instances of embodied perception that Dewey develops at length in *Art as Experience* (AE). Hence, my work offers a pragmatic account of rhythm, based on Dewey. By rhythm, I mean all the vital processes without which sentience—which is one’s capacity to feel for oneself, apprehend/be aware of, affect and be affected by, modulate and be modulated by the feelings of others in an environment, process and evaluate the relational effects of this capacity—is not possible.<sup>94</sup> These rhythms suggest an optimal pace and relationality among different sentient encounters that Dewey would consider our “doing and undergoing” in the world: “In art, as in nature and in life, relations are modes of interaction. They are pushes and pulls; they are contractions and expansions; they determine lightness and weight, rising and falling, harmony and discord.”<sup>95</sup> Aesthetic experiences are possible because of our attunement to the rhythmic relations, interactive forms, moving situations, and contextual parts through which life folds and unfolds.

From a Deweyan perspective, aesthetic experiences between a living organism, and its environment that proceed with a certain satisfying pace or rhythm potentially feature what we can call *mindful habits*. Mindful habits showcase the bodily attention to everyday features involving

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>94</sup> Donald M. Broom, *Sentience and Animal Welfare* (Wallingford, Oxfordshire: CABI, 2014), 5.

<sup>95</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee, 1934), 49-140.

other communicators, and the self. Through the practice of mindful habits, the frequency of satisfying rhythms in everyday experiences can potentially increase, thereby impacting the ethical, emotionally aware, and embodied attention to community, participation, and communication. For example, if habits as Dewey writes are our somatic-moralistic refracting media that acts as chemical reagents, then their persuasive, and thereby rhetorical power is in perceiving, filtering, re-orienting, and healing unhealthy accommodations of racial, sexual, economic, language, gender, culture, and ability-based differences in an increasingly diversifying world. Similarly, to recall my re-reading of Dewey's notion of habits of correct speech as mindful habits of speech, I suggest that the field of communication now focus on developing *wellness-attuned personalities* as opposed to well-adjusted one. As an expansion of how we have hitherto understood mental health and hygiene, a wellness-attuned personality can be oriented to the sort of satisfying rhythms of experience that welcome, and adapt to sounds of differences with an ear for similarities.<sup>96</sup> The wellness-attunement is precisely the aesthetic and affective resonance of one's body with one's own mind, which then has the rhetorical power to affect others through mindful habits of speech in relevant environments and ecologies.

The discussion on rhythm so far is a Deweyan way of understanding the concept. However, there are potential problems to this approach that I discuss next. As I noted in the introduction, quotidian rhetoric stands for mundane, and sentient undulations among bodies and ecologies. They also suggest in-between slippages and spillages contrary to Dewey's notion of a rhythmic consummation, or a complete state of grand and summative experience, which connotes the aesthetic. The study of quotidian rhetoric on the other hand also speaks to the "affect-driven

---

<sup>96</sup> Lipari, *Listening*.

aesthetics” that do not revel in neatly manicured folds of everyday experiences. It embraces fragmentary states of experience, the lively tangle suffused with cognitive and extra-cognitive refrains in which the ordinariness of experience unfolds.<sup>97</sup> Fragmentary states are those somatic refrains in which “a form of relation as a rhythm, a fold, a timing, a habit, a contour, or a shape comes to mark the passages of intensities (whether dimming or accentuating) in body-to-body/world-body mutual imbrication.”<sup>98</sup> Simply put, in quotidian rhetoric I also emphasize inchoate experiences that do not always actualize into fully matured experiences, which Dewey would consider aesthetic, but merely register on the body. Such fragmentary rhythms of quotidian rhetoric also sustain force encounters among other bodies/creative forms of living (human, non-human, extrahuman, machinic, non-machinic, organic, non-organic, vegetal and bestial) in technological, and natural ecologies.<sup>99</sup> Examples of complete and fragmentary experiences can include the rhythmic interchanges of shallow or relaxed breathing, blood flow, heart beating, chlorophyll generation, artificially intelligent modes of sustenance and so forth.

**Life-affirming rhythms.** Everyday rhetoric mobilizes one’s day to day life with exciting, stultifying or blasé, but nonetheless life-affirming rhythms. When I use the word life-affirming, I mean that the rhythms themselves affirm life insofar as they are attuned to sentient refrains in which bodily dispositions to live, and persist do not transmute into deathly impulses. However, life-affirming rhythms, as I extract from a Nietzschean perspective, affirm the possibility of death and annihilation as inseparable from the painful will to live: “A highest state of affirmation of existence is conceived from which the highest degree of pain cannot be excluded: the tragic-

---

<sup>97</sup> Melissa Gregg, and Gregory J. Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 14.

<sup>98</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory Reader*, 13.

<sup>99</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory Reader*, 1.



Dionysian state.”<sup>100</sup> Similarly, I do not privilege only those life-affirming rhythms that uplift organisms in their environments (for example affects/feelings of joy, bliss, excitement, and enthusiasm in doing, and undergoing any daily activities like reading, writing, playing, talking etc.). Life-affirming rhythms in the sense described by Deleuze and Guattari are not partial, but are present between environments as critically perceptive affective relays energizing and slowing down bodies: “Drying up, death, intrusion have rhythm.”<sup>101</sup> In the presence of such progressive and regressive rhythms, I also do not conflate life solely with human experiences, considering the increasingly blurred ecologies of “biomedia and biopolitics,” that have challenged scholarly notions of what it means to be alive in any foundational sense.<sup>102</sup> In fact, only privileging the human aspect of positive, and beautiful experiences, would be ethically incompatible with my goals of conceptualizing quotidian rhetoric. A humanistic stance further reinforces the same moralizing human-centric norms that value abstract categories of the good, the beautiful, the transcendental, while marginalizing ugly or less than pleasant ordinary affective encounters with everyday aesthetics. I am not suggesting that everyday aesthetics do not include the pursuit of uplifting feelings that bring one peace and relaxation of the body-mind. I am just opposed to fetishizing only those life-affirming rhythms that display a controlled attitude toward life, and a sense of mastery over the environment. Controlling orientations may be habitual safety nets for most of us in some everyday sense. But, as a dominant habit of approaching everyday life, controlling dispositions are counterintuitive to the unplanned unfolding of ordinary lived experiences amid the highest degree of affirmation and pain.

---

<sup>100</sup> Nietzsche, *Will*, location 10198.

<sup>101</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

Life-affirming rhythms equally include sometimes unarticulated, but viscerally felt, affects of anxiety, anger, distress, disgust, sadness, disgruntlement, and discouragement (called emotions when organized for meaning in the symbolic landscape of language) among others that can potentially retard, “suspend,” propel one’s action or even leave one overwhelmed in an environment.<sup>103</sup> These rhythms cannot be pinned down. They can render a person’s world completely out of control, uncertain, and downright frightening. Each instance of the body’s rhythmic experience of progressive or regressive, pleasant or unpleasant feelings, echoes the Jamesian refrain: the whole cubic capacity of the body, in an inextricable tangle with different ecologies is sensibly alive for better, and for worse, in sickness, and in health. The question is how well-attuned a personality is to the sensate layers of the body’s isometric capacity that affirms pain, and pleasure in equal measures. The cubic capaciousness of life-affirming rhythms also includes those bodily and affective excesses that are silenced, shamed, manicured, and relegated to the domestic sphere in patriarchal societies.<sup>104</sup> Such bodily excesses are associated largely with the female body, which I hope to celebrate as affective encounters with everyday aesthetics.<sup>105</sup> The forms of experience that the rhythms generate based on their social and bodily interchanges, can take a wide variety of shapes, shades of feelings, affects, emotions, movements, arrests, and breakdowns. For example, one’s heart may continue to beat, but the body registers feelings of anxiety, as one’s heart palpitates forcefully in the wake of an uncertainty, a brief altercation, or the sight of an unleashed pet. One may also experience breath constriction, profuse sweating, nausea, a knotted gut, or a loose stomach which prompts the body to feel anxious. Another example can

---

<sup>103</sup> Gregg, and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 1.

<sup>104</sup> Hélène Cixous, Keith Cohen, and Paula Cohen, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” *Signs* 1 no. 4 (1976): 876-885.

<sup>105</sup> Cixous et al., “Laugh,” 876.

be feeling out of the environment's control which prompts feelings of stress and frustration in traffic, or in completing a quotidian task owing to pressures of time and/or space. In all of these everyday experiences, there is a life-affirming rhythm to anxiety (and the related cluster of stress, frustration, depression and/or fatigue), because it is an unpleasant affirmation of the body's sentient capacity itself.

All three-dimensional instances of equal parts affirmation and pain, index the expansiveness of all life-affirming rhythms. This exact same intensified and expansive ordinariness that makes possible a rhythmic engagement with living is Dewey's warrant to live like a "live animal (*qui vive*)."<sup>106</sup> Just like the live animal attentive to its movements in any given environment in which bodies affect other bodies, Dewey encourages one to tune into every kind of life-affirming rhythm bodies have the capacity to perceive during a particular time and space, but remain available due to poor habits of attention. All such disparate feeling-based cues one accrues from life-affirming rhythms can generate different forms of experiences that one might articulate as stuckness, a total state of desuetude, ambivalence, a complaining attitude and/or opportunity for growth. In other words, one may utilize the life-affirming rhythms in multiplicities to articulate, perform, and habituate themselves to their common experiences of life-affirming rhythms in everyday rhetoric. The discussion on life-affirming rhythms, both in the context of Dewey and affect theorists, brings this chapter to a close. The next chapter is where test the waters of their compatibility between the inter-disciplinary bodies of my work, primarily by investigating three main aspects. First, I evaluate common orientations between the fields or orientational overlaps as I call them, through the pragmatic notion of meliorism. Within this discussion, I also

---

<sup>106</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 19.

focus on terms common to both fields such as habit and sensation, leaving enough room for their creative differences in the deployment of the terms. Second, since my work is primarily an aesthetic and affective explorative articulation of everyday experience, it makes pragmatic sense to see how the two sensate bodies of knowledge oriented toward notions of experience. Finally, the last section infolds rhetorical treatments of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory, which affords me a productive space to discuss, what these existing rhetorical accounts of the body achieve and miss in their work on embodiment. The potential gap that emerges is the space within which I stage the impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory, to feature aesthetic and affective modes of embodiment, in what I call everyday or quotidian rhetoric.

## Chapter 2: Quotidian Rhetoric: Deweyan Aesthetics and Affect in Rhetoric

Chapter two unfolds in three major sections. In the first section, to exemplify the potential fit I have been trying to articulate between Deweyan aesthetics and affect in chapter one, I first focus on the pragmatist idea of *meliorism* (that I define in the discussion itself). As a concept and what I consider a common orientation to Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory, meliorism helps demonstrate their collaborative commitment to apprehending the ordinary and everyday intensities of experience. Of course, in the process of evincing this potential resonance, I do not promise a perfect fit. There are just enough *orientational overlaps* to show why pragmatist aesthetics and affect theory have a collaborative future, worthy of curiosities and explorations. I also focus on terms such as habit and sensation, key to both affect and aesthetics in the first section.

In the second section of chapter two, I proceed to utilize the interdigitating, interdisciplinary encounter between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory through a discussion on experience. Experience is the substance that stands under quotidian rhetoric. Experience in the context of this work is also my performative stance that embodies an affective encounter with Deweyan aesthetics. This is why I find it crucial to direct attention to the general notion of experience per se, especially as pragmatists, and particularly as Dewey engages with it. In the same section, I also consider how theories of affect approach the notion of experience, especially in norm-challenging contexts. In the third and final section of chapter two, I re-visit my discussion on quotidian rhetoric so far to connect it with existing scholarship on rhetorical theory's relationship with both aesthetic experiences and affective encounters. Some guiding questions for these three sections are: What are the aesthetic and affective dimensions of experience? How are they similar and different? How have past and present scholars utilized aesthetic experiences and

affect theory in building scholarship on rhetorical theory? What forms of experience further qualify, heighten, and hopefully produce a bodily knowledge of an environment? What does enrichment/denigration of experience in a given environment mean for quotidian rhetoric in general? With these guiding ideas in mind, let us explore orientational overlaps between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory.

### **ORIENTATIONAL OVERLAPS: DEWEYAN AESTHETICS AND AFFECT THEORY**

Interestingly, Deleuze and Guattari approach affect through works of art in *What is Philosophy?* as does Dewey for his theory of esthetics in *Art as Experience*. Call it serendipity, but despite the divergence of time periods within which these figures thought through affect and aesthetics (*Philosophy*, 1994 and *Art*, 1934), it seems there are spaces of convergence that merit an interwoven discussion between the two. What Dewey defines as the aesthetic, that is “experience as appreciative, perceiving, and enjoying” or an energetically receptive yet surrendered out-going of experiential undergoing is precisely how Massumi describes affect, as both a traumatic punctuation and “continuous...background perception” that inaugurates one’s vital signs and possibility, their “non-conscious self-perception.”<sup>107</sup> Affect theory is helpful in branching out and detailing the felt nature of aesthetic energies that do, undergo and transmute into the aesthetic that Dewey doesn’t care to ironically consummate, an action that is so central to his processual theory of aesthetics. Hence, this section is a fecund “bloom-space” where aesthetics and affect can experience resonance. Not only do we need to know the aesthetics of affect but also the affective contours of aesthetic bloomscapes. There is a difference in the vocabulary of affect theories and the pragmatists, yet they point to the same rhythmic interchanges that give life a

---

<sup>107</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 47-53; Massumi, “Autonomy,” 97.

flavor, an intensity, a sensitivity to change, an attunement, a comportment. When considered in dialogue with each other, pragmatic aesthetics and affect theory have much in common with which to enrich each other. Pragmatic aesthetics give us the symbolic resources to articulate aesthetic experiences. Affect theory on the other side keeps us both suspended and animated in the for-now with its ongoing not-yetness of rhythms, intensities, and circuits between what Dewey calls the doing, undergoing and ultimately the savory consummation of an aesthetic experience. Apropos of the potential resonance between affect and pragmatic aesthetics, in this section, I will approach the said interweaving from the pragmatic idea of *meliorism* as a general orientation that I think befits both ways of thinking through affective and aesthetic experiences.

**Meliorism.** The general orientation of affect theory (if that is even possible to pin down given its mutating postures and capacious gestures of theorizing) is that of tapping into the layered promises and possibilities “for-now” of affect’s “not-yet” as I have iterated multiple times in this work.<sup>108</sup> This implies that affect theorists see affective potential moving both as a promissory note for action, for hope, joy, “resonant affinities” and such.<sup>109</sup> Other theorists in the same tradition register its threatening and menacing capacities as my work has hopefully demonstrated so far. Since in this work I ultimately want to establish the connection between affect studies and pragmatist aesthetics, I will adopt apropos of a pragmatic approach à la Dewey, a melioristic orientation to the promise and perils of bodies and environments shaping each other in affective and aesthetic interchanges. By a melioristic orientation, I mean a habit of interacting with the present moment and apprehending its good and bad components,<sup>110</sup> to accrue a useful and

---

<sup>108</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 12.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Scott R. Stroud, “What Does Pragmatic Meliorism Mean for Rhetoric?” *Western Journal of Communication*, 74 (2010): 45.

pragmatic path to action from it. This does not mean foreclosing on the ill effects of a situation or reifying the benefits of a favorable one.

A melioristic dispensation of affective circuits is in synchrony with the classical pragmatic sense of open-endedness to all experience or the more contemporary affective not-yetness, the “messy ongoing-ness of process” so that what is happening can be savored as is and becomes the premise for possibility and sustained engagement with the world as is.<sup>111</sup> For example, note another similarity in the commitments and values of Deweyan pragmatist aesthetics (and pragmatic thought in general) and affect theory. Affect theory insists on the negation of any concrete distinctions between binaries only to focus more on force relations, encounters and intensities within which the body is always imbricated and constantly becoming. Gregg and Seigworth note affect theory’s disregard for distinctions that it considers frankly untenable because of affect’s own messy and unmediated emergence: “Almost all of the tried-and-true handholds and footholds for so much critical-cultural-philosophical inquiry and for theory—subject/object, representation and meaning, rationality, consciousness, time and space, inside/outside, human/nonhuman, identity, structure, background/foreground, and so forth—become decidedly less sure and more non-sequential (any notion of strict “determination” or directly linear cause and effect goes out the window too).”<sup>112</sup>

As I noted in chapter one, based on his pragmatist ethic and through his work on aesthetics in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey vociferously echoes affect theory’s strong opposition to divisive dichotomies such as reason/emotion, mind/body, concept/percept etc.<sup>113</sup> In comparison with affect

---

<sup>111</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 14.

<sup>112</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 4.

<sup>113</sup> John J. Stuhr, ed., *Classical American Philosophy: Essential Readings and Interpretive Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.



theorists, Dewey may have a more causal and structured view of time and space. He may stress the integration of oppositional elements and dichotomies to result in aesthetic experiences that enrich and add value to human experience. And all of these orientations may be at odds with affect theorists who conceive the future of affect theory as anything but “moving forward in some kind of integrated lockstep.”<sup>114</sup> But in true pragmatic fashion, he enunciates the value of flows, pauses and rests, continuities, and growth in experiences that are aesthetic and educative only when the past is considered as a part of futurities.<sup>115</sup> Consequently, in aesthetic and educative experiences, the present moment can free up for one to attend to it in habitually mindful mental and somatic comportments.<sup>116</sup>

For example in *Art as Experience*, Dewey writes: “Such characteristic as continuity, cumulation, conservation, tension, and anticipation are thus formal conditions of esthetic form...A rigid predetermination of an end-product whether by artist or beholder leads to the turning out of a mechanical or academic product.”<sup>117</sup> Even in his staid form of expression, much disparate from affect theorists one can note Dewey’s commitment to strongly opposing foreclosure to the endpoint of an aesthetic experience despite valuing a sense of anticipation that consummates the aesthetic and makes it pleasurable. Of course, the point of my discussion is not to show how contemporary affect theory perfectly matches Deweyan thought. That would be anesthetic and almost amount to affective betrayal. My point is to develop bloom spaces of resonant affinities, unities, and multiplicities between these two diverse and eclectic schools of thought (so far apart

---

<sup>114</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 3.

<sup>115</sup> John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1950); John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: The Van Rees Press, 1934), 36.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 138.

in time and space). Yet, the aesthetic and affective modes of perception are convergent in their musings on the quality, immediacy, intensities, and rhythms of experiences for all of which the body is an irreplaceable site of all action and possibility. In fact, the multiplicities through which, Massumi articulates the theoretical orientation of affect is pleasantly and surprisingly attuned to pragmatist William James' meliorism as well. For example, as I have noted before Massumi discusses the emergent tendencies of affect that trouble linear temporality and also invite a re-figuration of one's somatic interchanges both in their corporeality and virtuality (perhaps immateriality as Ron Greene would offer).

As Massumi notes, the body in its virtual avatar becomes in potentia because it embodies "the pressing crowd of incipencies and tendencies."<sup>118</sup> Massumi writes further: "In potential is where futurity combines, unmediated, with pastness, where outsides are infolded, and sadness is happy (happy because the press to action and expression is life)."<sup>119</sup> It is this particular statement that is remarkably similar to why in William James's ultimately melioristic orientation, borne out of his own trysts with deep depression, and associated with the "theorization of despair," communication is the hopeful condition of living anyway.<sup>120</sup> Affective and pragmatic orientations are both melioristic insofar as both welcome the potential, promise, threat and the in-betweenness of human/inhuman/organic/inorganic/machinic interchanges through which living thrives (or not). Both consider such life-affirming conditions of highest affirmation and pain, as press to action and expression. An open-ended orientation to action then inspires a negation of dichotomies and dualities and most importantly a respect for the sensibilia without which no affective or aesthetic

---

<sup>118</sup> Massumi, "Autonomy," 91.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Gregory J. Shepherd, "Pragmatism and Tragedy: Communication and Hope," *American Pragmatism and Communication Research*. ed. by David. K. Perry (New York: Routledge, 2001), 242.

perception is even possible. There are two significant nodes of overlap that further qualify the melioristic orientation of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory while creating a foothold in a general notion of experience, which follows in the second section of this chapter. The first node connects to habits. The second node that explains the flow of habits deeper is the idea of sensation. The nodes along with meliorism also follow up on the life-affirming rhythms of quotidian rhetoric. Let us now consider the notion of habit from the point of view of both Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory, particularly Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's idea of the rhizome.

**Notion of Habit: Dewey in conversation with Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome.** For pragmatists such as Dewey and William James, habits have a strong relational, malleable, artful, and linear component that imply a harmony between an organism's interaction with her environment.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, for Dewey, a habit is not just a mindless or routinized repetition, a "bare recurrence of specific acts," but an organization of "acquired predisposition[s]" to will something.<sup>122</sup> In Dewey's explication, a habit is connected to past experiences, "which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematization of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity."<sup>123</sup> Dewey's view may resonate in some ways with an affective view of habit, but not totally jibe with the more non-teleological, and asystematic approach to habit in affect theory. However, where Dewey comes close to affects' extra-cognitive field of intensities is when he talks of habits as "affections, that all have projectile power and that a predisposition formed by a number of specific acts is an immensely more intimate

---

<sup>121</sup> Dewey, "Human Nature," 15-16.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

and fundamental part of ourselves than are vague, general, conscious choices.”<sup>124</sup> The predisposition could be precisely our acquired somatic habitudes toward both negative, and positive affects to which we ascribe emotional meaning and dynamic quality in aesthetic experiences. Affects can be operative in some subdued form alongside the dull and alive life-affirming bodily rhythms, merely brushing against the symbolic registers of dominant emotions, all still suffusing the body’s cubic capacity of sensation.

By a similar token, affect theory’s attention to an ordinary and everyday as a “habitually rhythmic (or near rhythmic) undertaking: endeavoring to locate the propitious moment when the stretching of (or tiniest tear in) bloom-space could precipitate something more than incremental”<sup>125</sup> is a commitment that speaks to the Dewey’s aesthetic proclivities. Gregg and Seigworth note the need for a habitual attention to affective emergences that one typically misses on a day to day basis:

That is, these affective moments—at once all-powerful and powerless—do not arise in order to be deciphered or decoded or delineated but, rather, must be nurtured (often smuggled in or, at other times, through the direct application of pressure) into lived practices of the everyday as perpetually finer-grained postures for collective inhabitation.<sup>126</sup>

The important point to note apropos of affective orientations is that affective habitudes can also be centrifugal or dispersive, and not necessarily subscribe to a teleological center around which they must coalesce or round out as Dewey would strongly recommend. Regardless of their differences, for both camps habits are impersonal in that they constitute a shared social experience. For example, Dewey’s thoughts on “moral dispositions” from 1922 as socially shared habitual

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>125</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 12.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 21.

conduct, and not isolated achievements of character, could not be more agreeable with how contemporary affect theory approaches affects as relays, and social passages because of which one body has the capacity to affect another. Dewey writes: “Honesty, chastity, malice, peevishness, courage, triviality, industry, irresponsibility are not private possessions of a person. They are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces. All virtues and vices are habits which incorporate objective forces.”<sup>127</sup> Overall then, habit is a *productive space* where the pragmatists can be infolded into the affective context, and vice-versa.

An aesthetic experience in the Deweyan sense, when considered as the premise for living like an animal alert to all of its sensations, palpable in the here and now is precisely the promise, the not-yet potential or latent futurity that we cannot apprehend in affect. The aesthetic as Dewey writes is in the undergoing of an experience of the organism being receptive to its energy as a surrendered control, a habit that tempers one’s senses so that they can be engaged fully with the movements, rhythms, intensities, percolations, effusions, dehiscences (ruptures), and eviscerations of an environment. In opposition to the more conservative view of habits such as that of Kant or Sartre (Dewey perhaps fits the middle ground here between his spontaneity and rigidity in defining the habitual experience of the aesthetic), Elizabeth Grosz approaches habit from an affective orientation. For this, she invokes the philosophies of Deleuze, Bergson, and Ravaissan to re-mold the notion of habit as something mechanical or reductive into a “creative capacity that produces the possibility of stability in a universe in which change is fundamental.”<sup>128</sup> Habit in its Groszian iteration is attuned to futurity, unpredictable sensations, “free acts,” open-endedness and is always

---

<sup>127</sup> Dewey, “Human Nature,” 16.

<sup>128</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaissan, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” *Body & Society* 19 (2013): 219.

in potentia.<sup>129</sup> In the realm of quotidian rhetoric, since I am equally attuned to cultivating an affective notion of habit, I turn to Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the rhizome and draw upon the rhizome's characteristics to imagine something I call *rhizomatic habits*. An embodied practice of rhizomatic habitudes of experience underscores the importance of attunement to extra-cognitive refrains in my intended enrichment of quotidian rhetoric.

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari introduce the figurative concept of rhizome as a non-directional, non-binary, lateral, and seamlessly connected proliferation of multiple refrains/entities/bodies/ecologies, or a "throne of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages"<sup>130</sup> that are not subservient to a totalizing view of arboreal growth (typically Western ideals of transcendental truth, beauty, and justice). Deleuze and Guattari draw the literal inspiration for rhizomes from the bestial, and vegetal habitus. As a plant, a rhizome is an organic entity with a "subterranean stem" system that can both reach out in multiple directions while clustering to produce "bulbs and tubers."<sup>131</sup> For example, tubers such as potatoes, turmeric or ginger are rhizomes which can connect to other organic living/non-living forms without a prescribed path.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, rats can be considered rhizomes based on their habits of burrowing: "Burrows are too, in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout."<sup>133</sup> Rhizomes communicate a political statement of the small, a landscape of subterranean habits, and the quotidian as I appropriate in my work: "A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>130</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), 9.

<sup>131</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 8.

relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals.”<sup>134</sup> Rhizomes communicate a habit of everyday experience in which hierarchies in language, power differences among societal groups, impasses, privileges, and disenfranchisements are acknowledged in a democratic ecology. However, a rhizome’s creative force of experience opens up to and queers such blockages in a manner that both the habit and its habitus (environment) are transformed by relation. The transformation is on-going like the creation and destruction of “short-term memory.”<sup>135</sup> In the on-going exchanges between bodies and ecologies, habits embody a little modicum of hierarchy while habitus become slightly more welcoming and open-ended.

Let us recall the introductory encounter two, to which I attributed a fairly expansive form of experience. In light of rhizomatic habits, I would suggest that the interlocutors in that exchange practiced rhizomatic habits. They bore witness to the societal precarity affecting them differently yet similarly. The interlocutors formed a rhizome of precarity, and solidarity with each other without reducing the experience to either a unity or a multiplicity, but just an ongoing refrain of quotidian connections, and change. Rhizomatic habits thus embody the notion of mobility, that does not focus on initiations and consummations per se. Instead, such habits thrive in what Deleuze and Guattari call a “milieu,”—a middle place, a “plateau” in which on-going movements of “variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots” among disparate living and non-living entities produce different forms of embodied experiences (my emphasis).<sup>136</sup> In the embodiment of

---

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>136</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 21-22.

rhizomatic habits, there is no pressure for demonstrating mastery or competency. If a rhizomatic habit breaks down the flow of a performance, it starts up again from that middle place. Furthermore, rhizomes make a transformative map with the world, and not just a bare-boned sketch or tracing of it. Therefore, through Deleuze and Guattari I offer that rhizomatic habits are “detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable...” with multiple access and exit points that further heighten the fluidity of everyday experience. Rhizomatic habits can help us develop an attention to the extra-cognitive aspects of everyday experience.<sup>137</sup> Such habits resonate with what Danisch considers a “horizontal democracy” that encourages a re-distribution of power and “positive decision making” by ordinary citizens.<sup>138</sup> In light of quotidian rhetoric, I would amend Danisch’s comment to suggest that the practice of rhizomatic habits includes body-positive decision making on part of ordinary citizens. When somatic attunement becomes embedded in democratic deliberations, it has the potential to re-distribute power through a deep attention to both positive and negative affects of bodies in relation with relevant ecologies. Overall, rhizomatic habits help us approach the habitual from a transient or inchoate perspective, which enriches the Deweyan/pragmatic notion of habit.

If habits reveal one’s conscious and unconscious orientations to everyday phenomena, sensations are the somatic barometers through which one registers “feelings of warmth, of pressure, the hearing of a noise, the seeing of a color...” or as Dewey calls them “the stimulation of some peripheral nerve structure.”<sup>139</sup> As I understand them, sensations are the excitations that

---

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>138</sup> Robert Danisch, *Building a Social Democracy: The Promise of Rhetorical Pragmatism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 236.

<sup>139</sup> John Dewey, “Psychology,” in vol. 2 of *Early Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1967), 29.



suffuse a habit with some stimulation outside of the body. Habits then help one evaluate and attribute meaning to these suffused excitations in the world one embodies. For example, one may feel warmth and habitually attribute the sensation to a formal understanding of love. By a similar token, one may register physical pressure, and attribute that sensation to fear of commitment, claustrophobia, or something completely different from what I am attempting to articulate. Or in experiencing the aforementioned sensations, habits can be the mindful milieu, which only bears witness to the feelings of warmth or color, without attaching meaning to anything. Regardless of multiple imaginable scenarios, habits, and sensations in the somatic sense are intimately intertwined. In the following sub-section, I focus on how Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory orientationally overlap on the concept of sensation which will also make clearer the importance of habits to both fields.

**Sensation.** In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari associate sensation with art and subsume art's sensory experience within social conditions and environments beyond its own existence. When making art, they note: "We paint, sculpt, compose, and write with sensations. We paint, sculpt, compose and write sensations."<sup>140</sup> They also suggest the inception of art in the animal whose artistic endeavor is the creating of its dwelling place. For whatever purposes it serves the animal ("sexuality, procreation, aggression, feeding"), the territorial carving of its house connotes:

[T]he emergence of pure sensory qualities, of sensibilia that cease to be merely functional and become expressive features, making possible a transformation of functions... This emergence of pure sensory qualities is already art, not only in the treatment of external materials but in the body's postures and colors, in the songs and cries that mark out the territory. It is an outpouring of features, colors and sounds that are inseparable insofar as they become expressive (philosophical concept of territory).<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 166.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

Dewey approaches the sensory quality in art or fine art as he calls it from a slightly different vocabulary and mannerism of expression. But, there are resonances between affective and aesthetic approaches to sensation that evince the promise of a fruitful collaboration between the two. For instance, in *Art as Experience*, he defines sense in a general sense that locates it both within the affective/bodily and the symbolic: “Sense covers a wide range of contents: the sensory, the sensational, the sensitive, the sensible, and the sentimental, along with the sensuous. It includes almost everything from bare physical and emotional shock to sense itself—that is, the meaning of things present in immediate experience.”<sup>142</sup> With this expansive orientation to the sensibilia, he laments the apprehension of fine art with sensibilities that far removed from “common life, the life that we share with all living creatures[.]”<sup>143</sup> In fact, he heightens the importance of sensation in lived experience and distinguishes it from “gross sensation” that one might associate with animalistic tendencies to suggest that an attunement to one’s senses does not call for their denigration. In fact, this precise attunement to the senses is why Dewey opposes what he calls “the compartmentalization of occupations and interests” that dichotomize intellect and praxis, and most importantly emotion from “thought and doing.”<sup>144</sup>

Akin to Deleuze and Guattari, Dewey also re-enforces the bodily/affective/pre-symbolic quality of sensation that he observes goes amiss in everyday experiences because of which life sometimes tends to be a drab bundle of activities devoid of the esthetic. For example, he writes: “We see without feeling; we hear, but only a second-hand report, second hand because not reënforced by vision. We touch, but the contact remains tangential because it does not fuse with

---

<sup>142</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 22.

<sup>143</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 20.

<sup>144</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 21.

qualities of senses that go below the surface. We use the senses to arouse passion but not to fulfill the interest of insight...”<sup>145</sup> Dewey’s respect for the senses, which cater to both the body and the mind, however, has a communal focus (and perhaps educative too) as opposed to affect theorists who also highlight the sociality of affect but do not ascribe meaning to it. I say so about Dewey because despite an attunement to one’s preindividual somatic comportments, an experience can only have meaning (and an aesthetic flavor) to it when it connects the organism with its environment and transmutes this interaction “into participation and communication.”<sup>146</sup> Regardless of the orientational difference between affect and Deweyan aesthetics, there is an important orientational overlap between aesthetic and affective theorizations of sensation. Having discussed the orientational overlap between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory through key ideas such as meliorism, habit, and sensation, I now focus on section two of the chapter, the aesthetic dimensions of experience followed by the affective dimensions of experience. Section two opens up to give way to rhetorical theory’s relationship with both Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory which features as the third and final section of chapter two.

## **AESTHETIC DIMENSIONS OF EXPERIENCE**

For Dewey, experience in its primal sense is relational since it signifies an interchange between an organism and her surroundings, that further transmutes the interchange into meaningful “participation and communication.”<sup>147</sup> The aesthetic dimension of experience explains how ordinary experiences become meaningful in Dewey’s work. This also means that the aesthetic dimension offers quotidian rhetoric rich symbolic resources from which to draw and articulate its

---

<sup>145</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 21.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

experiential repertoire. The aesthetic is rooted in the realm of sensations that commingle with other bodies in environments to engender lived experiences. Dewey notes that sensations have greater significance than being second hand citizens in the process of knowing. As he describes by way of a moralist's fallacious but sensuously cognizant understanding of sense, the latter has to do with "emotion, impulse, and appetition."<sup>148</sup> Dewey writes further in *AE*: "Sense" covers a wide range of contents: the sensory, the sensational, the sensitive, the sensible, and the sentimental, along with the sensuous. It includes almost everything from bare physical and emotional shock to sense itself—that is, the meaning of things present in immediate experience."<sup>149</sup> Dewey's emphasis on the sensate qualities of experience's aesthetic dimension details his commitment to conjoining emotionally purposive embodiment, with communicative practices. What I take away from Dewey is that without attending to the sensory apparatus of the body and its binding emotional quality, there can be no aesthetic experiences.<sup>150</sup> And sensuously attuned bodily activities infold the aesthetic dimension by actualizing into everyday habits that engender communication and participation.

Kale Puolakka attributes signifiers or "qualities" such as "cumulateness, intensity, and fulfillment" that heighten Dewey's sensory approach to aesthetic experiences and explain how one may have an aesthetic experience in different qualities and intensities.<sup>151</sup> Dewey considers this sensory realm "raw" material with which one must start their journey to apprehending the aesthetic dimension.<sup>152</sup> The raw material according to Dewey is: "in the events and scenes that hold the

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 22.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>151</sup> Kalle Puolakka, "Dewey and Everyday Aesthetics - A New Look," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 12(2014).

<sup>152</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 3.

attentive eye and ear of man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens: the sights that hold the crowd—the fire-engine rushing by; the machines excavating enormous holes in the earth’ the human fly climbing the steeple-side; the men perched high in air on girders, throwing and catching red-hot bolts.”<sup>153</sup> Dewey’s rich description of the sights and sounds that unfold on any ordinary day suggest his ethical commitment to configuring an “aesthetics of continuity” that negate reductive binarizations of experience into simply mind or body, emotional or simply intellectual.<sup>154</sup> Instead, two simple approaches to lived experience can expand our understanding of the aesthetic dimension in everyday aesthetics. One is the ordinary habit of attention to/attunement with one’s environment that fosters its potential impact on sentience. The second approach is that one’s sensuous capacity for relating with bodies and ecologies can be its own life-affirming rhythmic practice. With the aesthetic dimensions of experience in place, I now move over to a discussion on the affective dimensions of experience.

## **AFFECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF EXPERIENCE**

How does one define something so peculiar that it eludes the precise ability to be pinned down or emplaced within bodies interacting with each other in their environments, further proliferating, percolating and distributing this said something? For the sake of pragmatics, let us call this peculiar force of experience: affect. Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth (among a riot of explications) describe affect as the following:

Affect, at its most anthropomorphic is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotions—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world’s apparent

---

<sup>153</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 3.

<sup>154</sup> Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, 13.

intractability.<sup>155</sup>

Based on the aforementioned description including Massumi's view of affect, we know so far that affect is a somatically autonomous force encounter, force relation or one can say a life-affirming nod to a tangle of bodies and ecologies. It is important to note here that while the categorical difference between affect and emotion is helpful for a cognitive explanation (as in the introduction), in visceral everyday experiences it is hard to separate the two neatly. This is why an aesthetic dimension of experience buttresses the study of affect, because of the former's ability to formalize bodily experiences and perceptions of environments into patterns of bodily knowledges. Although, as I will discuss in the final section of this chapter, affect theorists such as Eugenie Brinkema, also push for the study of affect through a return to a formal approach, despite affects' dogged irreducibility to structuration. I will utilize this express dilemma as a productive impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect in chapter three. For now, let us re-visit experience from an affective stance.

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari discuss affect as a concept through works of art that persevere and are preserved, as the things that remain over and above their artists and audiences as "a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects."<sup>156</sup> As Deleuze & Guattari further define percept and affect:

Percepts are no longer experiences; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceed any lived.<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Gregg and Seigworth. *Affect Theory*, 1.

<sup>156</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 164.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Echoing Dewey's take on habits, Deleuze and Guattari aver that perceptions and affections are social experiences. Affects are free of individually isolated experiences. As one can infer from their tendencies, affects are largely "preliminal" and processual as it resides as a moment or "a more sustained state of relation," or sticks to organisms in their environments (vice-versa).<sup>158</sup> They move as the *entredeux*, an experiential passage of "forces and intensities" in-between milieus where bodies affect bodies ("human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise").<sup>159</sup> Figlerowicz notes the hinging potential of affective experiences with human/nonhuman/incorporeal/inorganic/neuroscientific and biological forays.<sup>160</sup> Eve Kofosky Sedgwick and Adam Frank likewise discuss the concept of affect based on psychologist Silvan Tomkins' work in the early 1960s that contests the heterosexist, telic and linear approaches to affect in disciplinary psychology.<sup>161</sup> Instead, affects from a Tomkinsian perspective (unlike the bodily drives) circulate freely around objects, and disregard the dualisms between means and ends.<sup>162</sup> The endless range within which (and beyond but also one that also respects its "threshold of intensity" as Rosi Braidotti writes), affects augment or deter bodily capacity for action and expression to become something other than itself is simply fascinating.<sup>163</sup> The multifold manner in which affective dimensions of experience infold exteriorities into bodies' sense, sensation, and "ecology of the self" makes for a fascinating exploration on how scholars and practitioners have engaged with this tricky force of encounters.<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> Megan Watkins, "Desiring Recognition, Accumulating Affect," in *The Affect Theory Reader* ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 269.

<sup>159</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 1; Watkins, "Desiring Recognition," 269.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Eve Kofosky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins," *Critical Inquiry* 21(1995): 503.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Rosi Braidotti, "Teratologies," in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, ed. Claire, Colebrook and Ian Buchanan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 160.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

To filter the affective dimensions of experience into a more specific tone that resonates with my work on quotidian rhetoric, I now discuss a sub-body of scholarship that attends to affects as everyday, the ordinary and evanescent aspects of experiences. As “feminists, queer theorists, disability activists, and subaltern peoples,” this group of scholars (not limited to the ones I discuss under) approaches affects as a sort of camouflaging endeavor to challenge normative frameworks within which bodies act and express their relations to each other.<sup>165</sup> The group also explores the habitual ways in which power is exercised so as to enable and constrain the world making experiences of bodies. For example, Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman’s work in *Sex, Or the Unbearable* can be considered a quotidian rendering of this particular affective trajectory. In *Sex*, Berlant and Edelman invoke the idea of *intercourse-as-dialogue* to connote the intimate, ordinary, incalculable, anxiogenic, ecstatic yet overwhelming experience of certain encounters that present an “affective paradox.”<sup>166</sup> Such intercourses challenge the sedimentation, autonomy, and sovereignty of identity in favor of “self-cleaving” slippages, ellipses, and lapses that still contribute to relation even if lopsided.<sup>167</sup>

José Esteban Muñoz’s work on queerness resonates with the political commitments of the aforementioned scholars. Muñoz discusses queerness and its archival as a fleeting, rather covert instantiation of non-sovereign desire in affective dispensations, that emerges as “traces, glimmers, residues, glimmers, and specks of things” within ordinary performances of the self.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, Kathleen Stewart’s work on *Ordinary Affects* enunciates the rich promise (and perils) of everyday

---

<sup>165</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory*, 7.

<sup>166</sup> Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman, *Sex, Or the Unbearable* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), vii-2.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> José Esteban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 8(1996), 10.



rhythms and intensities within which experiences coalesce and disperse in ordinary spaces, movements, their doings, and undergoings. Stewart's focus on the vibrancy of the ordinary "tangle of potential connections... that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies and emergences" affirms the group's attention to quotidian experiences of affect.<sup>169</sup> Stewart theorizes affects through openings that often can and do face neglect as unimportant, asocial, trivial or simply anesthetic.<sup>170</sup>

So far the discussion has covered section one, the potential orientational overlaps between Deweyan aesthetis and affect theory around concepts such as meliorism, habit, and sensation. With the help of section one, I then explored the aesthetic and affective approaches to a general sense of experience in section two. The general set up of sections one and two now helps me re-focus the aesthetic and affective dimensions to explicate their relationship with rhetorical theory. Section three is the place where my work on quotidian rhetoric becomes relevant to the setup of the previous two sections.

## **AESTHETIC DIMENSIONS: IN CONVERSATION WITH PRAGMATISM AND RHETORIC**

Dewey's theory of aesthetics is a rich resource that underscores the practical import of embodiment in enriching everyday communication. Several scholars in different traditions have engaged with different aspects of Deweyan thought. While the following accounts of scholarship explore and extend pivotal aspects of Deweyan aesthetics, there is still potential to account for the sensuous, relationally non-directional, feminist, and rhetorical notions of experience in everyday communication. My work on quotidian rhetoric is one such endeavor that mobilizes new

---

<sup>169</sup> Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>170</sup> Stewart, *Ordinary*, 2.

conversations in pragmatist rhetoric by engaging Deweyan aesthetics, everyday communication, the body, and its affects. In the meanwhile, some scholars have directed attention to the embodied forms of experience that creates the possibility for aesthetic experiences or what they consider everyday aesthetics.<sup>171</sup> Everyday aesthetics is an exploration of ordinary experiences, rhythms, and habitual practices such as daily commutes, physical, and web spaces of work, interactions, and recreational routines in which the body is not disconnected from its surrounding but utilizes its life-affirming rhythms to encounter living on as is.<sup>172</sup>

Everyday aesthetics is a more broad version of what Richard Shusterman calls *pragmatist aesthetics*.<sup>173</sup> Shusterman's idea further qualifies Dewey's work on aesthetics through its philosophical engagement with other lines of thought (both contentious and hospitable to Deweyan philosophy). Within pragmatist aesthetics, Shusterman develops his idea of *somaesthetics* that he defines as:

the critical, meliorative study of the experience and use of one's body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning. It is, therefore, also devoted to the knowledge, discourses, practices, and bodily disciplines that structure such somatic care or can improve it.<sup>174</sup>

With this introductory definition of somaesthetics, Shusterman's attunement to Deweyan pragmatism is crystal clear. We see the same sustained engagement with one's mental and somatic apparatuses for a lived experience that is sensorially and aesthetically enriching and serves one's creative self-fashioning. Shusterman extends Dewey's experiential focus to discourses and

---

<sup>171</sup> Thomas Leddy, *The Extraordinary in the Ordinary: The Aesthetics of Everyday Life* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2012), 77.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Richard, Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 4.

<sup>174</sup> Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, 267; Richard, Shusterman. *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

practices as well which makes his concept greatly amenable to rhetorical scholarship as well that my work on quotidian rhetoric should hopefully demonstrate. Bringing the body back into a place of reflective relevance is in crucial service of feminist projects as well since the exclusion of the body of discourses of reason and rationale has implied a philosophical disdain for the “icky” feelings or negative affects of shame, disgust, anger etc., passions, senses and the female body largely. For example, Lipari acknowledges this binaristic privileging (that the pragmatists have tended to disavow) in Western habits of speech and communication in which reason overrides emotion and speech trumps listening.<sup>175</sup> The same habits of binary privileging, translate into why certain bodies occupy the public sphere, while certain bodies are relegated to the domestic confines.

Shusterman acknowledges the habitual charge that I am attempting to make, more poignantly. He underscores how the theoretical humanities value the cognitive ends of human endeavors and devalue the human body in general only to treat it as mere means to attain these end points. The result is the body’s underappreciated association with that of “servants and women,” which is why pragmatic thought can be a productive and critically meliorative access point for inviting everyday aesthetics and affects to honor the body in all its quotidian movements.<sup>176</sup> Shusterman’s pioneering work establishes the need for attending to the body for enhancing one’s aesthetic apprehension and quality of life. However, his somatic focus does not fully address how the body can be developed as a communicative and rhetorical resource for understanding everyday experiences. To this end, scholars in the rhetorical tradition have also turned to pragmatist aesthetics to build new pragmatist vocabularies for understanding the habitual components of

---

<sup>175</sup> Lisbeth, Lipari. On Interlistening and the Idea of Dialogue. *Theory & Psychology* 24 (2014): 504.

<sup>176</sup> Richard, Shusterman. *Thinking through the Body*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37.

everyday experiences. More specifically, in the field of communication studies, scholars such as Scott Stroud, Robert Danisch, and Nathan Crick have explored intersections between American pragmatism and rhetoric with research ranging from artful criticism and citizenry in a Deweyan vein, democracy, civic life, and aesthetic rhetoric. Paul Stob also explores the intersections of American pragmatism and rhetoric with a focus on James and Burke specifically.<sup>177</sup> Since he does not particularly focus on the connection between aesthetics and rhetorical activity, I do not discuss his work here. Nonetheless, the aforementioned scholars pursue existential approaches to American pragmatism/Deweyan aesthetics through which most actions can be meliorative, aesthetic, and rhetorically enriching. They also demonstrate why rhetoric and aesthetics have a promising partnership especially in the way Dewey addresses that connection.

For instance, an act of criticism from a Deweyan orientation is an artful one that Stroud discusses in his work on what it means to do criticism artfully.<sup>178</sup> Just as aesthetic experiences in art are a matter of everyday perception, enjoyment, and appreciation for Dewey, Stroud suggests that the same orientation may be transposed on to acts of criticism. Criticism is for everyone and can happen every day. The quotidian feature of criticism constitutes a critical, creative, and reflective orientation that Stroud calls “pragmatist rhetorical criticism” in producing rhetorical utterances or executing acts of criticism.<sup>179</sup> Danisch echoes Stroud’s idea of artful criticism in his discussion on the connections among artfulness, aesthetics, inquiry, and what he calls “rhetorical citizenship.”<sup>180</sup> Danisch clarifies that rhetorical citizenship is based not just on the limiting

---

<sup>177</sup> Paul Stob, “‘Terministic Screens,’ Social Constructionism, and the Language of Experience: Kenneth Burke’s Utilization of William James,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 41(2008): 134

<sup>178</sup> Scott R. Stroud, “John Dewey and the Question of Artful Criticism,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 44 (2011): 28.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Danisch, *Building*, 248.

Enlightenment belief of “rights or identity,” but on ordinary citizens’ embodied habits of communicative participation, especially if democracy truly is a pragmatic way of life as per the Deweyan scheme.<sup>181</sup> Similarly, based on Deweyan pragmatism, Stroud posits the idea of an implied critic with a certain disposition, habit or orientation toward activities that acts of criticism can project in their reflective inquiries. Stroud challenges one of the dominant modes of criticism in rhetorical scholarship through Raymie McKerrow’s theory of critical rhetoric whose implied critic Stroud argues reflects on issues of domination or freedom. The problem with this orientation is that McKerrow’s implied critic is exclusionary and requires a professional status to execute such acts of criticism let alone always objectify communicative utterances of others as embodiments of power or inhibitors of freedom.<sup>182</sup> When understood from a Deweyan perspective, exclusionary orientations to acts of criticism or elitist notions of citizenry that Danisch calls out as “Enlightenment era of democracies,” foreclose on the possibility of ordinary individuals engaging in the artful and reflective pursuit for “practical judgment.”<sup>183</sup> The result is an anesthetic or somatically reduced apprehension of everyday aesthetics. Further, dominant habits of criticism and public deliberation ignore the fact that critical activity may equally entail a meliorative aspect, aimed at improving the quality of lived experience for the self and relevant others in any communal setting.

As a current example on the political despair plaguing the American democracy (ethically accounting for my personal feelings in relation with a larger environment at least), most recently Trump is at the receiving end of global flak for referring to Haiti and countries from the African

---

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 225-229.

<sup>182</sup> Stroud, “Artful Criticism,” 33.

<sup>183</sup> Danisch, *Building*, 229.

continent as “shithole” nations.<sup>184</sup> Along with the media’s discussion on Trump’s inflammatory utterances, ordinary citizens, immigrants, and global audiences also register Trump’s racist vitriol. They may find their own modes of expression including rational-affective acts of criticism and public deliberations through arguments, tirades, political commentaries, blogging, poetry, song, dance, and photography among several others. Some may choose to celebrate Trump’s speech as a politically-direct, nonetheless insensitive style of communication, that he has endorsed in his business enterprise and more recently his political career. Regardless of their political affiliation or orientation, such potential criticisms and quotidian reflections may feature on social media platforms, or take place as conversations among individuals in coffee shops, offices, homes, and bars. Or on the spectrum of human-non-human organic interactions, such rhetorical acts may imply a silent, despairing, bitter communion with frozen alive, bare trees on some random street in some unassuming part of the Northern hemisphere. Or ordinary reflections on Trump’s remarks may transform into an existentially fraught encounter with a cool water body in a sweltering shore somewhere in the Southern hemisphere. The permutations and combinations of criticism and citizenry in the aforementioned example may be endlessly vast. The point that I want to make through their endlessness is the somatically attuned (affective-aesthetic) investments that ordinary citizens continue to make in politically charged democracies across the globe. This is the collaborative coupling of rhetoric and aesthetics in a live political exigency.

On a related note, Nathan Crick challenges the “metaphysical logic” and Enlightenment view of rhetoric and aesthetics that denounces both as mere embellishments, cookery, and arts

---

<sup>184</sup> Julie Hirschfield Davis, Sheryl Gay Stolberg, and Thomas Kaplan, “Trump Alarms Lawmakers with Disparaging Words for Haiti and Africa,” *The New York Times*, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/us/politics/trump-shithole-countries.html>

devoid of substance.<sup>185</sup> Instead with a pragmatic (Deweyan) inflection, Crick pursues a reconstructive approach to what he calls rhetorical aesthetics. This eloquent fusion of rhetoric and aesthetics is in the service of democracy and social transformation, through powerful and ecstatic discursive formulations.<sup>186</sup> Much like other rhetorical scholars that feature in my work on quotidian rhetoric and take an interest in Dewey's pragmatic and non-dualistic approach, Crick observes that Dewey aligns himself with the Emersonian tradition. Based on Dewey's identification with Emerson's idea of the "great artist" that encourages audiences to experience their own selves deeply toward a consubstantial end of shared feelings, aesthetic experience becomes firmly embedded in rhetorical articulations.<sup>187</sup> As Crick writes channeling Dewey's approach to rhetoric: "Oratory, in other words, moves the will aesthetic feeling that transforms the divisions of mind and body into a sudden feeling of wholeness, unity, and purpose."<sup>188</sup>

Collectively, rhetorical scholars share the values and commitments of pragmatists like Dewey. where rhetorical scholars make up for the aesthetic dimensions of Deweyan pragmatism, they still come up short on developing the extra-cognitive or somatic aspects of rhetoric which entertains the body's rhythms, affects and sensuousness of everyday experiences. Danisch nods to the rhythmic richness of rhetoric through his reflections on Donald Schön's idea of the "reflective practitioner" based on diverse musical jazz forms that require "collaborative listening" and "improvisation."<sup>189</sup> Based on Schön's work, Danisch emphasizes that a reflective rhetorical practice locates deliberation in the feeling-based attunement to or embodiment of "artful doing

---

<sup>185</sup> Nathan, Crick, "Rhetoric and Aesthetics," *Democracy and Rhetoric: John Dewey on the Arts of Becoming* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 130.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>187</sup> Crick, "Rhetoric and Aesthetics," 133.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> Danisch, *Building*, 239-243.

(technê),” particularly “reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (“thinking on our feet”).”<sup>190</sup> Dansich appeals to rhetorical citizenship through the cultivation of reflection in practice through which ordinary citizens are able to re-visit and revise “routines and habits.”<sup>191</sup> While Danisch’s incorporation of musical metaphors helps us understand why rhetoric is inseparable from democratic practices, artfulness, and aesthetic inquiry, it does not necessarily infold Dewey’s somatic detailing of aesthetic experiences.

To clarify further, existing accounts of rhetoric and aesthetics mention the importance of embodied habits in democratic deliberations, but they do not describe how such habits unfold in day to day environments. Do embodied habits of communication entail an attention to breathing, to the multiple affects of the body, or to the sensate rhythms that bodies and ecologies experience in relation? If so, how? Other body-positive avenues of embodiment include the breaches, the lapses, and the somatic slippages that retard communicative practices. What does the body register in such ill-fated circumstances and how do negative feelings contribute to an extra-cognitive view of rhetoric? Despite different deployments of Deweyan pragmatism whether through somaesthetics or pragmatist rhetoric, work still needs to be done in bringing together both the cognitive and extra-cognitive dimensions of everyday experiences that embed the body, its affects, and everyday communication in everyday aesthetics. My work on quotidian rhetoric endeavors to do so by producing a contrapuntal pace of conversation between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. With the aesthetic dimension of experience emplaced within rhetorical studies, we can now focus on the affective contours of everyday experience with respect to rhetoric.

While the aesthetic dimension because of its formal nature helps attribute motives to

---

<sup>190</sup> Danisch, *Building*, 241.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 242



particular performances of quotidian rhetoric, and articulate meaning in the symbolic realm of language, the affective dimension attends largely to the visceral rhythms and bodily intensities that mostly escape linguistic coding. However, rhetorical scholarship on affect attempts to capture the presence of these extra-cognitive and pre-symbolic bodily rhythms and forms. It is a valuable resource for sharpening the meaning driven locus of pragmatist aesthetics and rhetorical theory. Debra Hawhee acknowledges the affective turn in rhetorical scholarship through a persistent attention to extra-rational forces such as “affect, desire, movement, and bodily sensation” in opposition to the majority of logocentric rhetoric.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, as I noted in my introduction on form’s importance for both aesthetics and affect, a rhetorical engagement with affect theory becomes an important aspect to enlist under the affective dimension of experience.

## **RHETORICAL THEORY AND AFFECT**

Within the context of rhetorical studies and affect, Hawhee surveys the centennial history of rhetorical theory’s engagement with sensations and senses that she enlists as “rhetoric’s sensorium.”<sup>193</sup> Based on thinker-philosopher Henry More’s work, Hawhee describes the sensorium as an embodied outline of sensations (“limn”) that links bodies and materiality is attuned to “sensory perception” and pre-exists articulation and knowing.<sup>194</sup> She outlines past rhetorical engagement with sense insofar as related to the idea that sensations direct the actions and expressions of “thoughts and feelings.”<sup>195</sup> Hawhee’s work gives us a glimpse of affect’s general with engagement with experience that builds affect-driven rhetorical scholarship. Here

---

<sup>192</sup> Debra Hawhee, “Language as Sensuous Action: Sir Richard Paget, Kenneth Burke, and Gesture-Speech Theory,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (2006): 332.

<sup>193</sup> Debra Hawhee, “Rhetoric’s Sensorium,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (2015): 4.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Burke's reflections on the rhythmic attributes of form in *Counter-Statement*, show rhetoric's historical proclivity to conjoin the body with rhetorical practices and highlight the affective dimension of form:

The appeal of form as exemplified in rhythm enjoys a special advantage in that rhythm is more closely allied with "bodily" processes. Systole and diastole, alternation of feet in walking, inhalation, and exhalation, up and down, in and out, back and forth, such are the types of distinctly motor experiences "tapped" by rhythm...A rhythm is a promise which the poet makes to the reader—and in proportion as the reader comes to rely upon this promise, he falls into a state of general surrender which make him more likely to accept without resistance the rest of the poet's material...We mean in all rhythmic experiences one's "muscular imagination" is touched.<sup>196</sup>

Burke's formal remarks index an everyday experience of affective encounters through an embodied performance of quotidian rhetoric. The performance implies the idea of habituating the body's own muscular imagination to the rhythms, continuities, pauses, rests, arrests, breakdowns and shocks of lived experiences. Burke's views on form also explain why he considers form as "the psychology of the audience"<sup>197</sup> and consequently attuned to rendering experiences pleasurable for the audience's psyche. In *Counter-Statement* Burke suggests that "form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite."<sup>198</sup> Sometimes certain obstacles can frustrate or delay the process of satisfaction only to engender as Burke notes, "a more involved kind of satisfaction."<sup>199</sup> As I mentioned earlier, Brummett affirms the importance of form (especially its role in rhetorical studies and pedagogy) precisely because of its ability to organize and structure ordinary and everyday experiences in patterns.<sup>200</sup> Form's capacity to create an appetite refers to its proclivity toward extra-rational (affective) force encounters that touch the

---

<sup>196</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 141.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> Brummett, "Form," 378.

muscular imagination and involve rhythm, movement, and sensory perception. For Burke, these affective forces appeal through their formal properties and evoke bodily responses to the patterned pleasures that their movement generates.

Hawhee invokes Burke's attention to the body's movements and rhythms (based on Sir Richard Paget's gesture-speech theory) in shaping communicative praxis and creating what she considers a "bodily poetics."<sup>201</sup> With a poetic attention to the body, one can focus on attributes of "energy, vitality, and liveliness as rhetorical elements" in language use that helps explain how affective forms in quotidian rhetoric.<sup>202</sup> With regard to rhetoric's affect's futurity, Hawhee envisions a communally and sensuously attuned space that emphasizes embodiment in "rhetorical activity."<sup>203</sup> This vision for rhetoric does not seem too alien too Dewey's hope for embodied and aesthetic experiences actualizing themselves through communication and participation. However, not all scholars who engage with rhetoric and affect agree with Hawhee's vision. Brinkema does not necessarily theorize affect from a communal sense but she does stress the relational modality of affects and warns against a personalization of affective explorations since it conflates personal affective "consumption" with the commercial flows of affects.<sup>204</sup> If we are to focus on affects as the excess that offers "resistance to systematicity, [and] a promised recovery of contingency, surprise, play, pleasure, and possibility," then our affective experiences must be capable of being generalizable, that is having the capacity to be read formally and in their particularities through a re-turn to affect "as a problematic of structure, form, and aesthetics."<sup>205</sup> Here, in strange

---

<sup>201</sup> Hawhee, "Language," 333.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>204</sup> Brinkema, *Forms*, 32.

<sup>205</sup> Brinkema, *Forms*, xvi-30.

resonances, Brinkema's approach to affect reminds us of Dewey's emphasis on aesthetic experiences being relational and formal with similar and dissimilar conceptual means and ends. Yet, when understood together affects and aesthetics are not just concepts that tend to "my mind/my body problem" but are formal patterns and relational performances of everyday experiences that shape quotidian rhetoric.<sup>206</sup>

Similarly, in his attempt to expand the symbolic resources for rhetorical theory, Murray discusses the need to understand rhetoric in both its discursive and non-discursive (terms for which he credits Susanne Langer) modalities.<sup>207</sup> Murray focuses on the non-discursive modality to suggest that linguistic systems are not just word oriented but also include extra-linguistic, imagistic and affective (multimodal) symbols from musical, filmic, performative (dance) and architectural media.<sup>208</sup> The multimedia that Murray loops into the ambit of non-discursive rhetoric enriches our understanding of how extra-cognitive experience is brought to bear on affective forms. With a curious attention to the different ways in which affective multimedia interact with bodies to shape everyday experiences, the aesthetic dimension of experience can utilize these visceral forms of knowing and feeling to translate the same into quotidian rhetoric. Together, aesthetic and affective dimensions of experience can be seen in conversation with rhetorical theory based on the existing scholarship in the field. Through quotidian rhetoric, my goal is to bring aesthetics and affects in conversation with each other through the common medium of rhetorical theory, the body, its affects, and everyday communication. Based on the three sections of chapter two, we now have firm idea of how pragmatists and affect theorists overlap orientationally along the conceptual and

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>207</sup> Murray, *Non-Discursive*, 1.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

experiential lines. We can now move toward the pressing concerns of the two fields that conflict with each other and produce, what is potentially a metamorphosing rhizome of quotidian rhetoric that honors both stuckness and mobility of experience. The following chapter discusses a few such impasses between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory.

### Chapter 3: The Impasse

“An Impasse. So much the better.”—

Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 20

The dance between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory has been a heady adventure so far. Chapter three, however, is a different story for my interdigitating participants, because they get stuck here with each other, experience the formal arrhythmia of an impasse, a playful deadlock of sorts. This impasse is what Lauren Berlant considers “a temporary housing,” in which Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory inhabit a nomadic or playful space of formal transformations, but not necessarily any concrete resolutions.<sup>209</sup> The rhythms of this impasse are not quite in synch. Moreover, Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory are jammed together, because their realms of possibility, through their orientational overlaps have officially lapsed. Each cannot return to their original orientation to action and expression, because their encounter has displaced and ruptured their sense of self: a vulnerary mark of love and loss, the highest state of affirmation of their existence, the highest degree of pain.

What follows next is an extended moment of stuckness and mobility, which is chapter three’s landscape of play. Chapter three extends chapters one and two by setting the stage for quotidian rhetoric, its inter-connected theoretical frameworks, and their points of consent and dissent. As I have been underscoring throughout, Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory are two diverse fields that encourage a focus on the body but have such radically different approaches to

---

<sup>209</sup> Lauren Gail Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 5.

utilizing somatic a/vitality. The first section of chapter three underscores how these two diverse yet similar orientations of somatic theories converse, interlock, oppose, sustain and transform each other to help readers discover new scholarship on habits of everyday communication, the body, its affects, and the possibility of aesthetic experiences in the quotidian.

In the second section of chapter three, I test what I have theorized as life-affirming rhythms, or the affective states of the body in an interplay with one's aesthetic perception of an everyday environment, in the context of what I will call a "food truck cluster." To this end, in the duration spanning February-April (2018), I ventured into the food truck hubs of Austin, Texas along two primary access points, both of which represent my text and field of investigation. One access point entails Austin's major food truck clusters in Downtown Austin (primarily Rainey Street), and the ones related to culinary spaces, marking a particular identity and practice, such as the vegan food truck clusters of North Loop. Since observations of the food truck spaces depend on the temporality of the foot-traffic permeating the environment of production and consumption (e.g. busy v/s empty space), some food truck clusters in this mix represent empty texts on account of my fieldwork's timing. The second access point of my fieldwork involves a participant observation of the SouthBites® food trailer park, featured at Austin's annual music, film, technology, and interactive media event, *South by South West* (SXSW) in March 2018. This access point is more epochal in the sense of its global popularity and appeal, which may complicate the everydayness of its unfolding. But, since it implicates the Rainey Street food truck hubs in a different yet similar temporal and spatial contexts, I am encouraged to experience their live interplay. To garner support for examining embodied experiences within active and everyday spaces, such as food truck clusters, I turn to the methodological framework of McKinnon et al. within the area of rhetorical

field methods. These scholars encourage the rhetorical examination of the field along the five-fold co-ordinates of text, context, audience, judgment, and ethics.<sup>210</sup> I utilize this particular structure throughout my analyses in chapters three and four, while also noting what I do differently in addition to this method, such as providing a detailed account of my embodied modes of relating to the field as a way to address the aesthetic and affective dimensions of my research.

### **A MAP MISPLACED: IMPASSES AND DETOURS TOWARD QUOTIDIAN RHETORIC**

The route to unpacking the life-affirming rhythms that energize quotidian rhetoric is through impasses and slow detours. But, that is what an aesthetic apprehension of affective encounters would hope for in its seekers, especially if one considers Dewey's work. A change, a movement in attitude takes place within an impasse because even in the midst of arrest, deadlock, and breakdown all of which threaten life with cessation, the psyche of living on proliferates in whatever direction it pleases. As Dewey writes in reference to aesthetic experiences: "Nevertheless, if life continues and if in continuing it expands, there is an overcoming of factors of opposition and conflict; there is a transformation of them into differentiated aspects of a higher powered and more significant life."<sup>211</sup> In the study of quotidian rhetoric, I draw inspiration from Dewey's approach to opposition and conflict as media for transformation. However, the power and significance of quotidian rhetoric is in the express indeterminacy, and non-direction of experience through which habitual discourses are relayed, formalized, and articulated among bodies affecting bodies. Such quotidian encounters emerge from the movements, and collisions of life-affirming rhythms that are both within, and without the control of its inhabitants and participants.

---

<sup>210</sup> Mckinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 3.

<sup>211</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 13.



**Deweyan approach to embodiment.** As my discussion has shown so far, life-affirming rhythms help us understand how bodies and ecologies relate with each other in ordinary experiences, communicative encounters, and habits. However, the life-affirming rhythms themselves arise from an impasse between two seemingly irreconcilable forces of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory that ironically go great lengths to reconfigure the body into academic dialogue particularly in the humanities. Both accounts of theorizing underscore an attention to rhythmic and sensate media in apprehending everyday encounters with other bodies in any given environment. Both still seem polarized because of the way they articulate “embodiment and materiality” in their own scholarly circuits.<sup>212</sup> Deweyan aesthetics in agreement with overall pragmatist ethics disregard dichotomies of body and mind, emotion and reason among others that analytical schools in Western philosophy have tended to exalt and considers them in relation to their surroundings.<sup>213</sup> For Dewey, a sensory attention to the body’s movements and rhythms in resonance with one’s mental faculties is key to understanding his theory of aesthetics.<sup>214</sup> Yet, Deweyan aesthetics thrive on order, structure, systematicity, activity, harmony, meaning, balance, change within the status quo and above all communal participation for experiences to count as aesthetic: everything that is potentially a thorn in affect’s theoretical side.<sup>215</sup> While Dewey acknowledges the presence of chaos, passivity, stasis, “caprice and disorder,” in everyday experiences, he exhibits a contradictory and manicuring proclivity in drawing the aesthetic from tasteful moments of “delightful perception,” rhythmic stability, balance and a maturation of an

---

<sup>212</sup> Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), xi.

<sup>213</sup> John J. Stuhr, ed., *Classical American Philosophy: Essential Readings and Interpretive Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>214</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 53.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-22.

inchoate experience into that which participates as something useful in the world of meaning.<sup>216</sup>

In Deweyan aesthetics, the bland moments or the moments in which emotions reach their excessive helm do not count as the necessary means of developing the balance of senses, mind, and body that he attributes to aesthetic experiences. In such expressions, it is quite hard to miss Dewey's Aristotelian distance from anything that threatens with excess and does not point to the golden mean of habits with which experiences develop toward their consummation and may be perceived, appreciated and enjoyed as aesthetic.<sup>217</sup> He comes close to affect theory's sensory orientation when he accounts for one's sense to attend to a moment of suspended action through "emotional shock."<sup>218</sup> Just at that moment though he veers away into the realm of active expressivity when he aligns sense with actualized action, participation and communication all in the pursuit of aesthetic experiences.<sup>219</sup> In Dewey's writings, he encourages an attentive re-turn to the vegetal and animal world for mimicking their sensorial alacrity, but there is a subtle speciesism in Dewey's thought, in which humans either exalt their aesthetic sensibilities to heights of delight or "sink below the level of the beasts."<sup>220</sup> For all the binaries that Dewey denounces, he still falls prey to the dichotomy of humans and animals, in which the subject of aesthetic and sensory perception is the privileged human body.

**Affective approach to embodiment.** On the other end of the embodiment-materiality continuum, affect theory thrives on symbolic resistance to containment and articulation. Affects are "principally a rejection: *not* semiosis, *not* meaning, *not* structure, *not* apparatus, but the felt

---

<sup>216</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 18-19.

<sup>217</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 42-49.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 23.

visceral, immediate, sensed, embodied, excessive.”<sup>221</sup> Affects are force encounters of everyday sensations and experiences slipping and passing between bodies that affect each other in unvoiced and unheard intensities of “action and expression,” suspension and retardation, all irreducible to symbolic structures of time, space, and language.<sup>222</sup> With the positionality of these work forces in relation and stark opposition to one another, I do not think that the impasse between affect and Deweyan aesthetics can ever be resolved. And perhaps the hope for a quick and easy resolution is not what these accounts really require. What can be done perhaps is to utilize each account’s movement and rhythm whether oppositional or convergent and play with it in tandem. Instead of jumping in the line of aesthetics’ or affect’s fire, one can play with their *ludic conflict* by moving rhythmically with them in “circular motions”—and test out what positionality emerges organically within the sticky messiness of this affective-aesthetic impasse.<sup>223</sup> The movement of affective and aesthetic life-affirming forces from which quotidian rhetoric spring takes shape along the same tensions, oppositions, and conflicts that can throw my work into a state of disarray. Here, I derive comfort from Dewey’s words on how aesthetic experiences as formal patterns of experience, of rhythmic stability and equilibrium, develop from states of disarray and tension: “There is in nature, even below the level of life, something more than mere flux and change. Form is arrived at whenever a stable, even though moving, equilibrium is reached. Changes interlock and sustain each other.”<sup>224</sup> My goal is to explore how Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory as sensate bodies of experiences affect each other, are transformed as interlocking force encounters or rhizomes in

---

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>222</sup> Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” *Cultural Critique*, 31(Autumn, 1995): 88-91.

<sup>223</sup> Harris L. Friedman, "Using Aikido and Transpersonal Psychology Concepts as Tools for Reconciling Conflict: Focus on Aikido and Related Martial Arts, Such as Hapkido." *Neuroquantology* 14, no. 2 (June 2016): 213-214.

<sup>224</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 13.

the process and sustain each other quite messily to give rise to what I call quotidian rhetoric.

## **AESTHETIC AND AFFECTIVE FORMS IN QUOTIDIAN RHETORIC**

One of the main tensions between aesthetics, and affect is how they articulate embodiment and the other is form (or patterns of experience) that manifests materially in embodied experiences of being and becoming. However, form's relationship with quotidian rhetoric is inextricable despite the aesthetic-affective impasse. For instance, and particularly in the realm of aesthetic experiences, the embodied, and formal characters of experiential rhythms inform form's capacity to impart meaning and value to everyday activities.<sup>225</sup> Aesthetic forms utilize the visceral intensities of affective forms and act as embodied sieves through which affective intensities may come into sharper relief as emotions or not. The emotional quality of an experience attributes differential motives to the rhetorical utterances of self and other and stamp (or stamp out) the aesthetic in/from one's everyday performance of quotidian rhetoric. To develop the formal aspect of aesthetic experiences, I engage the work of Dewey's theory of *aesthetics* in his *Art as Experience*.

Dewey considers an aesthetic experience or simply *an* experience, an embodied and rhythmic engagement of organisms with their social environment that can potentially enrich one's perception of time and space precisely because of their organic attunement to these formal markers of material experience. This is why Dewey's discussion on form in *Art as Experience* is important since form organizes one's experience in time and space meaningfully. Form allows for the experience to be appreciated, perceived and enjoyed as aesthetic. Form's temporal, causal and rhythmic attributes explain how aesthetic experiences emblemize a sense of maturation, unity of

---

<sup>225</sup> Barry Brummett, "Form, Experience and the Centrality of Rhetoric to Pedagogy," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 34 (2015): 379.

“doing and undergoing, outgoing and incoming energy,” and finally their “fulfillment and consummation.”<sup>226</sup> For Dewey, form is “the art of making clear what is involved in the organization of space and time pre-figured in every course of a developing life-experience.”<sup>227</sup> In his formal approach to aesthetic experiences though, Dewey pursues the same structuralist approach in which form gives meaning to space and time as experiences of organized finitude in which interchanges among bodies take place. And, this is the part where affective forms would resist Deweyan systematicity to formalizing aesthetic experiences.

Despite form’s propensity for generating and organizing meaning in Deweyan aesthetics, affect theory scholars such as Eugenie Brinkema have also attempted to read affective encounters closely and in a formal manner to understand their visceral and ecological impact in clusters and groups.<sup>228</sup> Brinkema insists that just because affects slip and pass as visceral intensities through networks does not make them impervious to formal interpretation. On the contrary, she notes that “only reading specific affects as having being bound up with specific forms gives us the vocabulary for articulating those many differences.”<sup>229</sup> In the context of quotidian rhetoric, one can say that affective forms of life-affirming rhythms still escape symbolic articulation but provide sensate and feeling-based patterns about the environment.

For Joddy Murray these affective forms may refer to “non-discursive forms of meaning-making, forms that take advantage of image, emotion, and nonsequentiality.”<sup>230</sup> Affective forms make themselves available for sensory apprehension and rhetorical apperception in “visual, haptic,

---

<sup>226</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 24-48.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>228</sup> Brinkema, *Forms*, xv.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> Joddy Murray, *Non-Discursive Rhetoric: Image and Affect in Multimodal Composition* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 2-3.

aural, olfactory, and gustatory” modes through what Murray (in the echoes of Susanne Langer) calls complex simultaneity.<sup>231</sup> In quotidian rhetoric though, I still maintain that affective forms do not consciously serve the purpose of meaning-making. Akin to Brinkema’s argument, affects must be read formally to discern the differences between different qualities of everyday performances, habits, and experiences in quotidian rhetoric.

Yet, the experiential, and life-affirming rhythms that are key to aesthetic experiences are an embodied aspect of our lives but do not always assume the sort of embodied attentiveness that has the formal potential to give life flavors of sensuous richness instead of insipid lifelessness. The reason is simply that we forget to inhabit the movements of the body, and as the pragmatists rue the divisive dualisms of mind and body, intellect and emotion, we forget that our experiences are not bifurcated into mental or physical alone. What happens in the body happens in the mind, and vice-versa. Either way, these ordinary embodied, and material experiences necessitate a curious attention to one’s bodily dispensations, and their felt exchanges with other bodies along with slippages between and passages to different everyday environments (or what Kathleen Stewart calls “ordinary affects”) that one enters and exits as they go about their daily affairs. Based on the formal differences and similarities between Deweyan aesthetics, and affects, my overall work offers a formal treatment of everyday experiences based on both fields, seeing where the tensions arise and what form of experience generates from the impasse.<sup>232</sup> The aforementioned marks the first part of the discussion in chapter three.

Now I move on to the second section of chapter two, the field based inquiry that supports my claims about the theoretical impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. I work

---

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 5-8.

<sup>232</sup> Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

through the impasse, with theoretical and praxis-oriented interchanges, which I explore by the means of participant observation in and around major food truck hubs in Austin, Texas. In section two, I describe the theoretical commitments of current rhetorical scholars, through the text, context, audience, judgments, and ethics (McKinnon et al.'s five-fold method) defining the ambit of scholars' investigation. Along with this theoretical synopsis, I offer my own embodied encounters of going about my gustatory field in Austin. The second section of chapter three is a paradoxical space of play in which some of my theoretical speculations about the impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory will fail. On the other hand, some reflections may rejoice in kindred recognition of the body. Either way, I portend a transformation of the disciplinary body with the highest degree of affirmation and the highest degree of pain.

### **UNPACKING THE CONCEPTUAL IMPASSE: INTERCHANGES BETWEEN TEXT AND FIELD**

Through my work on quotidian rhetoric, I echo the choral concerns of rhetoricians, who forge textual criticism with extra-textual criticism, to advance immersive, embodied, and experiential research modes in the field.<sup>233</sup> What do we stand to gain from such multimodal approaches to rhetorical criticism and scholarship? McKinnon et al. explain that for rhetorical scholars, an exposure to the field implies the rich possibilities of mining local or grassroots spaces/knowledge for "local, marginal, and/or vernacular discourses."<sup>234</sup> Endres, Hess, Senda-Cook, and Middleton refer to such multimodal rhetorical endeavors that interweave "rhetorical

---

<sup>233</sup> Danielle Endres, Aaron Hess, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Michael K. Middleton, "In Situ Rhetoric: Intersections between Qualitative Inquiry, Fieldwork, and Rhetoric," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 511-516.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.; McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 6;

inquiry, qualitative inquiry, and critical/cultural studies” as “participatory critical rhetoric.”<sup>235</sup> Under the auspices of field methods, rhetorical scholars bear witness to, produce, enact, and circulate scholarship that emerges “in situ” as “naturally occurring rhetoric” within the temporal and spatial immediacy of grassroots discourses through “the methods of observation, ethnographic interviews, and performance.”<sup>236</sup> Extra-textual research orientations are even more helpful for rhetorical scholars, keen to explore what Aaron Hess calls, “everydayness of rhetorical discourses.”<sup>237</sup> For example, Light discusses the constitutive immediacy of the 9/11 memorial, in producing what she considers a “security-conscious consumer subjectivity,” through her idea of a self-reflexive yet consumption oriented “*surveilling flâneur*,” “a modern city-wanderer...”<sup>238</sup> Vision is a dominant sense for a surveilling flâneur whose “distracted and detached gaze.” “eye/I” affects, and is affected by what is and is not consumed visually, and narrated rhetorically in the post-9/11 context.<sup>239</sup>

Particularly, rhetorical scholars’ capacious and embodied approach to rhetorical field methods is relevant to the inter-disciplinary participants of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory in an impasse. Despite their playful deadlock in chapter three, both emphasize the body as a primary site for undergoing quotidian forms of aesthetic-affective engagement, perception, enjoyment, stuckness, and mobility. To that end, I consider Light’s incorporation of “movement” as a fluvial methodology for apprehending the embodied (affective and aesthetic) dimensions of a

---

<sup>235</sup> Danielle Endres, Aaron Hess, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Michael K. Middleton, *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical Foundations for Studying Rhetoric In Situ* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

<sup>236</sup> Endres et al., “In Situ,” 516; McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 4.

<sup>237</sup> Hess, “Critical-Rhetorical,” 128.

<sup>238</sup> Light, “Visualizing,” 538-40.

<sup>239</sup> Light, “Visualizing,” 538-40.



visual rhetorical field (“National 9/11 Memorial”), as words of highest affirmation (notwithstanding the highest degree of field labor pains) stoking this impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory.<sup>240</sup> Furthermore, the difference between rhetorical practices and performances, which Endres et al. enunciate in their writing on extra-textual rhetorical modalities, enriches the study of quotidian rhetoric.<sup>241</sup> Rhetorical practices are repetitive or formal modes of apprehending the day-to-day, whose meaning-making capacity speaks to the aesthetic habituations of quotidian rhetoric. On the other hand, rhetorical performances are off-the-cuff dispensations, whose rupturing capacity to shake up the quotidianness of bodies entangled with ecologies, resonate with the affective dimensions of quotidian rhetoric.<sup>242</sup>

On account of my work’s inter-disciplinarity, I explore and observe the live action clusters of Austin’s food truck scene. Within this immediate food landscape, I account for its “all-encompassing sensual” life-affirming rhythms, the rhetorical practices, and performances of quotidian rhetoric so produced and circulated in situ, through the encounters of diverse bodies and environments.<sup>243</sup> One live action cluster representative of Austin’s culinary diversity is the grouping of food trucks at local areas such as Rainey street, East Sixth Street, North Loop (vegan trailers), and South Austin food trucks. Also investigated as a live action cluster is the SouthBites® food trailer park at the South-by-South-West festival, which happens every spring in Austin. My hope is that a comparative exploration these two live action clusters enriches the theoretical impasse and the orientational overlaps between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory I have

---

<sup>240</sup> Elinor Light, “Visualizing Homeland: Remembering 9/11 and the Production of the Surveilling Flâneur,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 538.

<sup>241</sup> Endres et al., “In Situ,” 516.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

established in the first couple of chapters.

Finally, the inclusion of textual plasticity and embodied practices of field work in rhetorical studies as important inventional resources supports my argument from chapter one. There is an ethical need to address the democratic diversity of a fast mutating global political milieu. Everyday rhetoric is an inseparable part of this milieu, whether it serves the purposes of either demolishing, disbanding, or building up public values, democratic infrastructures and imaginaries. As I note in chapter one, the study of quotidian rhetoric directs attention to the extra-cognitive rhythms, mindful/mindless habits, refrains, somatic, and social paces of aesthetic-affective experiences that enrich and extend our understanding of text-based rhetoric. In re-directing attention to the body in non-epochal everyday milieus, the field of communication may benefit from exploring *wellness-attuned (emotionally aware) personalities* based on ethically mindful habits of speech. A wellness-attuned rhetorical practice/habit of communication is opposed to striving solely for a speech-oriented, well-adjusted but stunted disciplinary exemplar of early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With a brief introduction to my field of investigation, I now move on to explaining the theoretical contours of a field: the five constitutive elements in McKinnon et al.'s rhetorical field methods, which make a field worthy of curiosities and explorations.

**Text.** As part of their mission to enrich and expand rhetorical scholarship, McKinnon et al. note that field methods indeed challenge the disciplinary notions of textuality.<sup>244</sup> Text in this sense can be active and alive sites of grassroots “discourses that manifest everyday, aesthetic, playful, and informative qualities.”<sup>245</sup> Examples of texts based on the current efforts (but not limited to) of rhetorical scholars can include, Light’s work on the National 9/11 memorial in New York City,

---

<sup>244</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 7.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

McHendry's deployment of participatory critical rhetoric vis-à-vis airport security practices, Dunn's fieldwork at the "Moonlite Bunny Ranch" based on her own rhetorical analysis of the "reality docu-series *Cathouse*," and Senda-Cook et al.'s investigation of stop gap "food systems" on an Omaha thoroughfare.<sup>246</sup> Endres et al. support the idea of textual plasticity through a nod to the "participatory turn" which makes room for embodied and "emplaced" practices of reflection, affective attunement of the feeling critic, and observation including textual analyses.<sup>247</sup> Conversely, the amplitude of hospitality that field methods extend to texts is in a Derridian sense hostile to the field itself, as "embodied, emplaced practices in the field that are recorded textually and digitally" cannot always limn the rich, and fleeting experiential landscapes symbolically.<sup>248</sup> Perhaps, a sense of futility in field methods is a humbling experience for rhetorical scholars, as it resets some of their own comforting or controlling habits of doing scholarship. Going beyond textuality, field-based rhetorical moves meaningfully trouble rhetoric's existing equation with acts of criticism, research ethics, and ensuing political commitments.<sup>249</sup> For instance, the voice of Karma Chávez in the polyphonic McKinnon et al. on rhetoric and ethics, notes that an attunement to field-based methodologies complicates a researcher's notion of responsibility, representation, and judgment because it is no longer possible to treat texts as lifeless.<sup>250</sup> Instead, texts are pulsing,

---

<sup>246</sup> Light, "Visualizing," 538; George F. (Guy) McHendry Jr., "Thank You for Participating in Security: Engaging Airport Security Checkpoints via Participatory Critical Rhetoric," *Cultural Studies ↔Critical Methodologies* 16; (2016): 552; Jennifer C. Dunn, "Going to Work at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch: Potentials of Rhetorical and Ethnographic Methods for Cultural Studies," *Cultural Studies ↔Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 527; Samantha Senda-Cook, Michael K. Middleton, and Danielle Endres, "Interrogating the 'Field'," in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Methods* eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma Chávez, and Robert G. Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 22.

<sup>247</sup> Endres et al., "In Situ," 512.

<sup>248</sup> Senda-Cook et al., "Interrogating," 32.

<sup>249</sup> Sara L. McKinnon, Jenell Johnson, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert G. Howard, "Rhetoric and Ethics Revisited: What Happens When Rhetorical Scholars Go into the Field," *Cultural Studies ↔Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 560.

<sup>250</sup> McKinnon et al., "Rhetoric and Ethics," 563.

sentient sites that impact a critic's "accountability."<sup>251</sup> Rhetorical critics can craft an argument about a particular living or non-living experience because they are accountable, not because they have the ability to provide the argumentative account.<sup>252</sup> Having discussed how field methods expand existing notions of textuality, I now discuss approach the ambient concern for rhetoricians exploring micro, minor, and everyday texts in the field: the context of field-based scholarship.

**Context.** With the intervention of field methods, McKinnon et al. reflect on the miscibility of text and context.<sup>253</sup> At least, it gets increasingly hard to delineate the difference in experience, since field methods bring an experiential, and embodied approach to rhetoric.<sup>254</sup> What then counts as context with respect to rhetorical field methods? In the context of his work on DanceSafe, a youth-oriented, educative initiative about drugs and "all-night dance parties" in "rave culture," Hess extends an important rhetorical concept, *kairos* or the opportune moment of delivery to include "local and contextual knowledge" for a rhetorician performing a critical ethnography.<sup>255</sup> For instance, Halililuc's hybrid orientation as a "Romanian post-socialist subject and a U.S.-based rhetorical scholar" in her examination of Dan Puric's nationalist rhetoric, exemplifies the importance of local and contextual knowledge in rhetorical field methods.<sup>256</sup> Halililuc is able to participate in Puric's rhetoric both as an audience member and a critic, which enables her rhetorical criticism to flow kairotically, and offer a transnational richness to field-based rhetoric.<sup>257</sup> Similarly,

---

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 562.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 9-10.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.; Senda-Cook et al., "Interrogating," 25.

<sup>255</sup> Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical," 138-140.

<sup>256</sup> Alina Halililuc, "Being, Evoking, and Reflecting from the Field: A Case for Critical Ethnography in Audience-Centered Rhetorical Criticism," in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Methods* eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma Chávez, and Robert G. Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 135.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 135-136.

Hess's kairotic attribution to contextualization mirrors McKinnon et al.'s claims, about textual-contextual miscibility in light of rhetorical field methods. Field methods enable rhetorical scholars to engage longitudinally, with a research field or "group's local habits and perceptions of deliberation, activism, coalition-building, self-representation and so on."<sup>258</sup>

For example, let us re-visit Dunn's rhetorical fieldwork and feminist analysis of "sex work" at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch brothel in Nevada, based on the reality docu-series *Cathouse* in a bit more detail.<sup>259</sup> Dunn's work exemplifies a rhetorician's kairotic need for live, local, and contextual knowledge of the field, "production, representation, and audience," which can only be gleaned over time.<sup>260</sup> As I understand Dunn's work, the local habits, perceptions, self-representations, and resistive practices of the women doing "sex work" locally and in the docu-series, actively co-produce their own counter-narrative to defy hegemonic media tropes of "illegal prostitution."<sup>261</sup> Complex and sensitive findings, such as evident in Dunn's work, are possible only through a sustained engagement with "intertextual" texts miscible with contexts.<sup>262</sup> As a nod to contextual plasticity, Senda-Cook et al. conjoin context with the dynamic, power-distributing and constricting qualities of field as a "rhetorical place," which is both an agentive and landscaping vector, as it "acts with, against, along the rhetorical practices it hosts."<sup>263</sup> To investigate place as a text also implies the examination of place as context. As an example, we can turn to Dickinson, Blair, and Ott's work on the rhetoric of museums and memorials. In their work, Dickinson et al. discuss something called "memory places," or specific places "...more closely associated with public

---

<sup>258</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 10.

<sup>259</sup> Dunn, "Going," 527.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid; 527-533.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 528-533.

<sup>262</sup> Dunn, "Going to Work," 526-528.

<sup>263</sup> Senda-Cook et al., "Interrogating," 24-25.

memory than others, for example, museums, preservation sites, battlefields, memorials, and so forth.”<sup>264</sup> Memory places are not just rhetorically forceful as investigative texts for rhetorical field methods. They are powerful contexts that permeate the rhetorical memory places to co-produce a “collective identity,” with which to reminisce about a particular public memory.<sup>265</sup>

Of course, it is one thing to consider context in the brick and mortar sense, as the aforementioned scholars have explored in their work on drug-education organizations, brothels, make shift food stations, and/or memorials among others.<sup>266</sup> With the advent of social media technologies such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and a whole other host of platforms within which everyday rhetoric happens, the study of context vis-à-vis texts and field methods, becomes even more compelling. For example, Silvestri observes that how the context of war, changes or *charges* even the most quotidian spousal interchange of a loving commitment, over a platform such as Facebook, thereby transforming it into a profound declaration of love.<sup>267</sup> The efforts of rhetorical scholars to contextualize the study of context in field methods communicate the promising landscape of rhetoric in the field. Now it is time to consider the next importance aspect of rhetorical field methods, one that further challenges the boundaries between the rhetorical critic and the field at play: audience.

**Audience.** Field methods enable rhetorical scholars to critically examine the everyday, as pulsing texts and contexts where rhetorical phenomena unfold across socio-cultural and

---

<sup>264</sup> Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, Brian L. Ott, and John Louis Lucaites, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014), 24-25.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>266</sup> Senda-Cook et al., “Interrogating,” 22-23

<sup>267</sup> Lisa Silvestri, “Context drives Method: Studying Social Media Use in War Zone,” in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Methods* eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma Chávez, and Robert G. Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 163-64.

transnational axes of “power/resistance,” privileges, and disenfranchisements.<sup>268</sup> By a similar account, they also encourage the critic to infold the audience into the same mix, as an agentic force that co-creates meaning along with/as the critic.<sup>269</sup> Together, the richness of everyday rhetorical phenomena along with a more diffusible audience, provide a generative space for field based rhetorical scholars. This potent combination of rhetorical moves is visible in extant rhetorical works on *in situ*, critical ethnography, and participatory critical rhetorics.<sup>270</sup> Taking a leaf out of, *in situ* modes of rhetorical scholarship within critical security studies, McHendry’s embodied experience of airport security rigmaroles is precisely the inventional space for an active audience that comprises the critic along with everyday travelers.<sup>271</sup> This airport-based audience collectively responds, resists, and participates in the anxiolytic security environment, while producing reflective material for everyday rhetoric pertaining to space, mobility, affect, and embodiment.<sup>272</sup> In a slightly different yet resonant tone, Haliliuc discusses a critic’s capacity to dynamically bear witness to rhetorical phenomena in a non-traditional role, which she calls “an audiencing critic.”<sup>273</sup> By this term (similarly attuned to Landau’s “feeling rhetorical critic”), Haliluc writes that an audiencing critic creatively accounts for the subjective and inter-subjective modes of cognition, feeling, embodiment, “temporality, materiality, and cultural specificity of rhetoric,” while exploring rhetorical events as both an audience and critic in a non-judgmental

---

<sup>268</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, Aaron Hess, and Danielle Endres, “Contemplating the Participatory Turn in Rhetorical Criticism,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 573.

<sup>269</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 12.

<sup>270</sup> Endres et al., “In Situ,” 516; McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 4; Hess, “Critical-Rhetorical,” 128; Middleton et al., “Contemplating,” 572-573.

<sup>271</sup> McHendry, “Thank You,” 552.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> Haliliuc, “Being,” 134.

manner.<sup>274</sup>

Akin to textual and contextual fluidity, rhetorical critics can easily interact with an audience in the field, as “active participants,” who experience the live effects of “power, inclusion and exclusion, multiple publics, and so on,” as opposed to bare-boned representations of the audience.<sup>275</sup> Re-considering Dunn’s work with the self-representing sex-workers, who reclaim and humanize illegal prostitution, as sex work at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch, easily validate McKinnon et al.’s aforementioned observations about the liveliness of field-based audiences.<sup>276</sup> Similarly, Silvestri’s live interactions with “post- 9/11 service members,” who offer a radically different explanation for why even mundane spousal interactions seem amplified over Facebook in the war context, support McKinnon et al.’s observations about field-based audiences.<sup>277</sup> If we recall Light’s work on the surveilling flâneur, and a post- 9/11 public memorial, it is the latter that helps constitute the “self,” the “eye/I” of a security oriented subjectivity, that identifies with the surveilling apparatus of the memorial, through the practice of taking pictures with the security personnel present.<sup>278</sup> In doing so, this surveilling self, compensates for the “more general loss of personal freedoms” at the site, with a reparative glance.<sup>279</sup> The eye/I looks out as an active citizen-audience, for the democratic distribution of freedom, and extends the mnemonic upkeep of patriotism, beyond the geo-political place of trauma.<sup>280</sup> With a fairly clear idea of how current rhetorical scholars in the field, have discovered novel approaches to re-vitalize older accounts of

---

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>276</sup> Dunn, “Going to Work,” 528-533.

<sup>277</sup> Silvestri, “Context,” 164.

<sup>278</sup> Light, “Visualizing,” 543-44.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid; Middleton et al., “Contemplating,” 572.



audiences in rhetorical studies, I now discuss the varying scope of judgement through acts of criticism within field-based rhetoric.

**Judgment.** Based on the interchanges between texts and fields, we have learnt that rhetorical scholars have revamped existing understanding of rhetorical texts, contexts, and audiences through exciting forays into fieldwork. McKinnon et al. similarly remodel judgment, by making room for extra-critical factors, which work alongside a critic's discernments and stylistic articulations of power, injustice, and resistance.<sup>281</sup> McKinnon et al. hope to establish a power "balance" between critics' agentic capacity for critical evaluation of objects, the beneficial or harmful impact of criticism on relevant communities, and the critics' ethical "responsibility" to acknowledge the "human" labor associated with those objects.<sup>282</sup> One way to address this balance of power is through the participatory turn in rhetorical fieldwork, as I have discussed previously. Let us re-visit Endres et al. work on in situ rhetoric, which features an "embodied and emplaced" locus of everyday experience in the participatory turn.<sup>283</sup> A return to the body as a sensory site for apprehending everyday rhetoric foregrounds the critics' own attunement to their bodily comportments, and critical capacity for self-reflection in relation with the field.<sup>284</sup>

A return to the body is perhaps Morris's call to the field to embrace what he considers "critical self-portraiture," a performative mode of artful criticism that "deepens critical engagement...and those contexts that make meaning, judgment, and action expansive, provocative, generative; in a word, powerful."<sup>285</sup> During airport security, McHendry's

---

<sup>281</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 16.

<sup>282</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 15.

<sup>283</sup> Endres et al., "In Situ," 512.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Charles E. Morris III, "(Self-)Portraiture of Prof. R. C.: A Retrospective," *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 33.

performative reflections on his own “embodied politics” as a cis-white, heterosexual, able-bodied, young male, trouble the “critic’s sovereignty,” and agency in interesting patterns.<sup>286</sup> When rhetorical critics acknowledge, that they embody everyday encounters with certain privileges, that realization alone is enough to question if one’s critical judgment to evaluate the everyday is sovereign enough. The critics’ humble admission, that they are not just floating, well-adjusted speech-heads, but embodied co-producers/consumers of rhetorical phenomena, may enable the “shift in agency,” McKinnon et al. hope to see in the interplay among judgment, critic, and the rhetorical field.<sup>287</sup> Ultimately, without the critics self-directed but relational attention to the body, deep critical engagement with everyday contexts to which Morris aspires is not possible.

Another way through which some rhetorical scholars address the balance of power between critics’ judgments and the field is through supplementing rhetorical analyses of media representations with live contexts of similar experiences. As I have discussed before, Dunn’s work on the reality docu-series “*Cathouse*” and her experiences of its live “production context” at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch contribute to this balance of power.<sup>288</sup> Dunn is not just utilizing her critical sovereign voice in making consummatory claims about “*Cathouse* as an atypical media depiction of prostitution as a job, or ““sex work.””<sup>289</sup> By actually venturing into the field, interacting with the women who are employed at the Ranch, and observing the everyday context of what might be lost in a text-based analysis, Dunn actively embraces what she considers a representational crisis (based on Norman Denzin’s work on qualitative inquiry).<sup>290</sup> Dunn’s experience of the field

---

<sup>286</sup> McHendry, “Thank You,” 555; McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 15.

<sup>287</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 17.

<sup>288</sup> Dunn, “Going,” 528-29.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

validates most of her claims about how Cathouse reframes prostitution in the media. At the same time, her work also makes room for the voices of the actual sex workers, who are able to challenge ossified media depictions of prostitution, which deny the workers dignified agency in doing what they do.<sup>291</sup> As I wrap up this introductory section on what accounts for a critic's judgment in a live context, I now consider the final element in McKinnon et al.'s pentadic methodology that directs field-based rhetorical criticism: ethics. If we have learnt anything from the history of communication studies, we know that ethics guided speech scholars in the early twentieth century to adopt the psychological ideal of a well-adjusted personality, a self-disciplined master of speech in other words. How far have we come from this control-oriented vision to one, which lets go its critical agency in an ethical gesture of responsibility to extra-critical/environmental factors in the object of study? Field-based methods in rhetorical studies might provide a substantial answer to the disciplinary distance we have traversed, in churning the ethical waters of rhetoric and communication.

**Ethics.** An ethical orientation to rhetorical criticism is not a stand-alone element in field methodology. Ethics undergird texts, contexts, and audiences of investigation along with the critics' judgments in relation to the three. Through an ethical lens, McKinnon et al. reprise the rhetorical field scholar's "responsibility" to the community that he or she studies.<sup>292</sup> Questions of "...truth, power, relationships, and representation," are connected to responsibility.<sup>293</sup> More so, if the community of interest represents under-represented populations or vulnerable ones on the margins of society, *community-over-scholarship* is the mantra of the rhetorical critic.<sup>294</sup> The

---

<sup>291</sup> Dunn, "Going," 528-29.

<sup>292</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 18.

<sup>293</sup> McKinnon et al., "Rhetoric and Ethics," 561.

<sup>294</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 18.

practice of this mantra in experience seems harder than articulating it in writing, especially when rhetorical scholars in the field have to confront questions of funding, manage the performance anxiety attached to their research ego, and quench the quest for yet another stellar publication among others. Perhaps, the practice of learning to be community-focused in research is how researchers let up their critical sovereignty, as an ethical gesture of humility. McKinnon et al. articulate this responsive orientation in/to field methods, as an “ethic of responsibility,” reflexivity, mindfulness, and accountability, which willingly wrestles with the desire for easy answers by asking the following questions:

How does this research design function for those studied? How are we relating to participants in the field? How does relationality function for participants? How are we representing people and communities we talk with and about in this research? What do these representations do? What are the politics of the information and analysis we have constructed?<sup>295</sup>

Senda-Cook et al. grapple with some of the aforementioned ethical tensions in *in situ* field work, especially when dealing with intangible and ephemeral evidence as opposed to more easily representable forms of “reproducible” evidence such as: “pictures of spatial relationships, quotes from speeches, tidbits from conversations...”<sup>296</sup> In response to the ethical dilemma of representation, they note: “When our descriptions of sensations and feelings become our evidence, we must reinvent representational practices.”<sup>297</sup> What does this re-invention entail? A representational re-invention could entail a representational sensitivity to the everyday and ephemeral with room for (mis)representations. This rhetorical move, as an ethical dimension of field-based rhetorical scholarship, actually has significant political implications for reclaiming the

---

<sup>295</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 18.

<sup>296</sup> Senda-Cook et al., “Interrogating,” 34.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

body from its rueful position in the disciplinary history of rhetoric and communication. It poses a brave challenge to our field's early obsession with the attainment of the well-adjusted speech personality, master orator ideal. Not only are sensations, feelings, "glances, and other undocumented features of live rhetoric," difficult to represent in speech alone, a lack of their account is an ethical breach in a rhetorician's fealty to the field (field-ty).<sup>298</sup>

Similar to *in situ* and participatory rhetoric scholars, for Pezzullo, a representational re-invention could entail the ethico-political implications of embracing "immediacy" in the field.<sup>299</sup> Pezzullo writes: "Giving credence to immediacy tends to be not an act of displaying arrogant mastery but an attunement to interdependence, cultural differences, and embodied epistemologies...We seek out contradictions, failures, sense of loss, anger, love, and much more."<sup>300</sup> Perhaps, the representational re-invention entails an ethical pivot to those interdisciplinary bodies, which invite richer sensory vocabularies and/or methodologies to examine everyday rhetoric, through an openness to contradictions, failures, (mis)representations, and (mis)recognitions. Some of these inventional turns have included, the rhetorical infoldment of qualitative inquiry, aesthetics, performance studies, "...and cultural studies through vectors of space/place, memory studies, archival studies, public deliberation, security, gender, media, affect, ethics, visibility, bodies, and materiality."<sup>301</sup> As the rhetorical field learns to undo some of its insulated legacy, through aforementioned ethical pivots, there is a chance that the field also

---

<sup>298</sup> Senda-Cook et al., "Interrogating," 34.

<sup>299</sup> Pezzullo, "Afterword," 181.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Dunn, "Going," 526-527; Endres et al., "In Situ," 513; Haliliuc, "Being," 136-37; Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical," 128-132; Light, "Visualizing," 538; McHendry, "Thank You," 551; Middleton et al., "Contemplating," 574; Phaedra C. Pezzullo, "Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement," *Western Journal of Communication*, 65 (2001):

experiences spatial re-invention. In Pezzullo's voice, the vision "...refuses to privilege dominant and residual conventional styles and instead engages emergent, oppressed, and marginalized voices, as well as unconventional, embodied, spatial, social practices, and nonhuman elements."<sup>302</sup> Based on my work, I would offer the addition of an impasse to Pezzullo's vision of spatial and representational re-invention through contradictions, failures, sense of loss, anger, love, and much more. It is an impasse, which entertains the richness of the quickening moment through simultaneous experiences of stuckness and mobility. The impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect, a space within which emerges the study of quotidian rhetoric is a kindred ethical turn in spatio-representational re-invention. This current impasse calls for a disciplinary re-sensitization to Deweyan aesthetics in current rhetorical scholarship, while interlocked unconventionally, and indefinitely with affect.

With a strong foothold in the field-based vectors and methodology guiding my work, I now move on to the field itself: the food truck culture in primarily in the North American markets. First, I provide socio-cultural, economic, and historical contexts to the emergence of the food truck culture in North America, including what it is that defines a food truck. How is this gustatory mode of service different from other food service providers? After offering a general lay of the land, I focus in on the culinary scene in Austin where I conduct my primary field work. The current research endeavors on the food truck culture bring awareness to certain racial, gendered, spatial, and class-based patterns of experience that the food truck scene writ large engenders. These patterns would serve as sensory touchstones for my participant observation in the different food truck hubs of Austin as I have noted in the introduction to chapter three.

---

<sup>302</sup> Pezzullo, "Afterword," 179.

## EMERGENCE OF THE FOOD TRUCK CULTURE IN NORTH AMERICA: HISTORICAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Trivedi-Grennier attributes the emergence of the food truck culture in the West between the 1860-1890s, with “chuck wagons” and “night lunch wagons of New York City,” serving low cost and easily transportable food to “cowhands moving across a herd-country,” and “blue-collar night workers” respectively.<sup>303</sup> In its more contemporary mode, Irvin dates “mobile food vending” in the US to the World War II era, during which time, such establishments provided affordable working class options of nourishment, with increasing associations with “immigrant food and entrepreneurship” (“roach coaches”) dating back to the 1960s.<sup>304</sup> The mobile attribute of food vending refers to the vehicle or the food truck (whose study itself is a new phenomenon in the food industry), in which sellers produce this food, and also distribute it to consumers via the truck.<sup>305</sup> The most current avatar of the food truck (qualified with the word *gourmet* in current literature), has its roots in the global economic recession of 2007-08, which resulted in significant job losses in the US hospitality industry, prompting many chefs to launch food truck enterprises.<sup>306</sup> Cowen states that the growth rate of the “\$1 billion[food truck] industry” has been “8.4%” since the recession hit the North American markets in 2007-08.<sup>307</sup> Consequently, these portable business

---

<sup>303</sup> Leena Trivedi-Grenier, “Food Trucks,” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Food Issues*, ed. Ken Albala (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015), 634. doi: 10.4135/9781483346304.n192.

<sup>304</sup> Cate Irvin, “Constructing Hybridized Authenticities in the Gourmet Food Truck Scene,” *Symbolic Interaction* 40 (2017): 46; Trivedi-Grennier, “Food Trucks,” 634.

<sup>305</sup> Simona Alfiero, Agata Lo Giudice, and Alessandro Bonadonna, “Street Food and Innovation: The Food Truck Phenomenon,” *British Food Journal* 119 (2017): 2463.

<sup>306</sup> Irvin, “Constructing,” 46; Nina Martin, “Food Fight! Immigrant Street Vendors, Gourmet Food Trucks and the Differential Valuation of Creative Producers in Chicago,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38 (2014): 1873; Trivedi-Grenier, “Food Trucks,” 635.

<sup>307</sup> Tyler Cowen. “Cheapskates, Pessimists, & Food Trucks.” *Foreign Policy* 196 (2012): 65.

ventures seemed especially lucrative at the time, because of a lower investment cost, along with more options for artful food expressions.<sup>308</sup> As Irvin writes, the recession versions of the food truck enterprises refurbished their roach coach image and re-marketed themselves as quirky, colorfully stylized purveyors of diverse food-on-the-go.<sup>309</sup> Siu agrees with the public re-orientation to food trucks in the recent times, insofar as they remain easy on pocket, and high in consumer perceptions of being “something modern, hip, and mainstream.”<sup>310</sup> For example, the zesty imagery of the food truck in the Italian context, which reflects likewise in the North American market, includes “gourmet cuisine and a variety of specialties and ethnic menus,” in the artfulness of the food truck landscape.<sup>311</sup> Wessel writes that the highly stylized food trucks offer cosmopolitan foods such as “Argentinian empanadas, Korean tacos, Middle eastern falafels, Asian fusion sandwiches, and even cupcakes.”<sup>312</sup> Other food truck offerings including creative renditions such as hurricane deviled eggs (“the perfect one-bite food truck dish”), tachos (“nachos without the chips”), loaded nachos chips, barbecue-pork tacos, and hurricane beignets among others.<sup>313</sup>

Besides, with the rise in the consumption of different media (including social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), food trucks have garnered even more publicity through “The Food Network’s Great American Food Truck Race, Los Angeles’s Annual Vendy Awards,

---

<sup>308</sup> Trivedi-Grenier, “Food Trucks,” 635.

<sup>309</sup> Irvin, “Constructing,” 46.

<sup>310</sup> Lok Siu, “Twenty-First Century Food Trucks: Mobility, Social Media, and Urban Hipness,” in *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader*, eds. Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan, and Anita Mannur (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 267. Accessed February 7, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>311</sup> Simona Alfiero, Agata Lo Giudice, and Alessandro Bonadonna, “Street Food and Innovation: The Food Truck Phenomenon,” *British Food Journal* 119 (2017): 2463.

<sup>312</sup> Ginette Wessel, “From Place to Nonplace: A Case Study of Social Media and Contemporary Food Trucks,” *Journal of Urban Design* 17 (2012): 514.

<sup>313</sup> Tyler Florence, “The Big ‘Not So Easy’,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 1, The Food Network, (New York: August 20, 2017), iTunes.



[and] San Francisco’s La Cocina Street Food Conference” among others.<sup>314</sup> While mobile food vending and food trucks, seem to be umbrella categories, these food dispensation modes have more shades and layers in different US based cities, such as Los Angeles, New Orleans, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Austin, Portland, Oakland, Savannah, and Washington D.C. among others.<sup>315</sup>

Lemon acknowledges the food truck proliferation in the US, particularly its racial, class-based, gendered spatial landscape, which enriches and problematizes notions of food diversity.<sup>316</sup> For example, Lemon notes the difference between Mexican food trucks called “*loncheras*,” and gourmet food trucks: “A *lonchera* operator prepares typically traditional tacos for primarily immigrant, Mexican, working-class clientele. Meanwhile, *gourmet* food truck operators are often praised by the American middle class for their “ingenuous” flavor combinations.”<sup>317</sup> Trivedi-Grenier adds that *loncheras* do not just serve tacos, but can also feature “regional Mexican specialities such as tamales, *cemitas*, *sopes*, and *huaraches*.”<sup>318</sup> For all the brightly diverse gusto with which traditional and gourmet food trucks deliver food to customers. race and gender still trouble their in-between space: particularly the fraught dynamic of inequity between producers and consumers of food trucks. For example, in reference to New York City’s food trucks, Agyeman, Matthews, and Sobel observe that traditional *loncheras* are usually “immigrant- and/or woman-owned,” and provide “traditional foods to immigrant or first-generation populations on the edges

---

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Irvin, “Constructing,” 44; Reina Ehrenfeucht, “Do Food Trucks and Pedestrians Conflict on Urban Streets,” *Journal of Urban Design* 22 (2017): 273; Trivedi-Grenier, “Food Trucks,” 635-637.

<sup>316</sup> Robert Lemon, “The Spatial Practices of Food Trucks,” in *Food Trucks, Cultural Identity, and Social Justice* eds. Julian Agyeman, Caitlin Matthews, and Hannah Sobel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 169.

<sup>317</sup> Irvin, “Constructing,” 46; Lemon, “The Spatial,” 169; Trivedi-Grenier, “Food Trucks,” 634.

<sup>318</sup> Trivedi-Grenier, “Food Trucks,” 635.

of the city.”<sup>319</sup> Gourmet food trucks, on the other hand, have white, male, middle-class men as owners, with a similarly well-off customer base, which enjoys their cosmopolitan patronage.<sup>320</sup> In a more racially diverse context, Siu traces Austin Texas’s emerging love for “Asian fusion” food truck culture (e.g. “Chi’Lantro and Peached Tortilla,”), which features gustatory intersections of Asian, Mexican, and Southern foods.<sup>321</sup> Interestingly, both of these food trucks have ethnically diverse owners with South Korean, Jewish, and Chinese American roots.<sup>322</sup> In Siu’s ethnographic work, while the Austin-based food trucks offer eclectic culinary and entrepreneurial diversity, they feature predominantly male work-environments, which thrive on the workers’ youth.<sup>323</sup> Such revelations about gender cannot be generalized to assume a lack of gender representation in Austin’s food truck culture per se. They still help outline, a general socio-cultural and political visage, of the North American gourmet food truck culture.

The difference between traditional and gourmet food trucks, however, is not just gendered, racial and/or class-based. The difference is also one borne out of vastly different policy treatments, which are meted out to these food truck owners, for instance, on account of legal transgressions. The *lonchera* owners experience breach of law through “threats to close, confiscation of their trucks, and arrest,” while gourmet food trucks can get away, quite bluntly put, with “fines and tickets” alone.<sup>324</sup> Similarly, Martin exposes the systemic “politics of the creative class” in Chicago’s neoliberal urban planning initiatives on mobile food vending, to which she attributes

---

<sup>319</sup> Julian Agyeman, Caitlin Matthews, and Hannah Sobel. *Food Trucks, Cultural Identity, and Social Justice: From Loncheras to Lobsta Love* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 313.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Siu, “Twenty-First,” 268.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

racial and class-based undertones.<sup>325</sup> She also notes that such initiatives affirm “the gourmet food truck movement, led by a group of largely white, native-born, culinary school-trained chefs,” in favor of the “immigrant (mostly Mexican) street vendors.”<sup>326</sup> Agyeman et al. weigh in on the socio-political and economic ramifications of mobile food vending, and notice similar patterns of conflicting legal affordances, depending, “...on whether vendors are perceived as creative-class, hip, entrepreneurial *trucksters* or as illegitimate, immigrant *hucksters*...”<sup>327</sup> When a city’s urban planners and “aldermen” perceive the two groups inequitably, the following is, unfortunately, obvious to infer.<sup>328</sup> Economic planning policies and ordinances, tend to invite those business ventures, which can transform a city into an emerging, “advanced economy,” teeming with “urban hipness,” as opposed to the one that limbos under less than desirable labels such as “underdeveloped,” “informal,” “public health risk,” and/or immigrant for that matter.<sup>329</sup> My point in reviewing the food truck literature up until this point is not to victimize one group at the expense of the other, because resistance is possible in the last place one looks. But, so far it is evident, that there are socio-cultural, political, and economic discrepancies in the US food truck culture, particularly along the lines of the *loncheras* and gourmet food trucks. In reference to food trucks in Columbus, Ohio, Lemon extends this charged dynamic through a discussion on their “mobility practices” amidst an interwoven web of “cuisine, space, and human mobility.”<sup>330</sup>

Compared to their brick-and-mortar counterparts, foods trucks, in general benefit from

---

<sup>325</sup> Martin, “Food Fight!,” 1868.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Agyeman et al., *Food Trucks*, 3.

<sup>328</sup> Nina Martin, “Why Regulations May Matter Less Than We Think: Street Vending in Chicago and in Durham, North Carolina,” in *Food Trucks, Cultural Identity, and Social Justice* eds. Julian Agyeman, Caitlin Matthews, and Hannah Sobel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 212; Martin, “Food Fight,” 1868-69.

<sup>329</sup> Martin, “Food fight!,” 1868; Siu, “Twenty-First,” 273.

<sup>330</sup> Lemon, “The Spatial,” 169-173.

their ability to move, and attract a consumer base, owing to their mobility.<sup>331</sup> However, mobility is another fraught space, where the rubber meets the road, quite ironically. Lemon argues that the mobility radius of traditional taco trucks (that he calls “immobile mobility”) is relatively smaller as compared to gourmet trucks, on account of the former’s immigrant ownership, migrant consumer base, (“Mexican day laborers”) and legal/socio-economic/cultural status in the US.<sup>332</sup> Consistent with the findings of food truck literature, gourmet food trucks in Columbus, are more mobile than taco trucks, heavier (more strategic) social media users, and serve “artisanal culinary delights to a primarily Anglo, middle-class clientele.”<sup>333</sup> Martin writes similarly in reference to Chicago’s gourmet food trucks, which present a “hip and cool” “creative, and gentrified” image, directed to persuade the hot pockets and “consumption practices of young professionals.”<sup>334</sup> Savvy social media usage only accents the hipness of gourmet food trucks more, particularly if it is something as easy as booking a meal-to-go, ahead of time, over text.<sup>335</sup> Martin’s observations on Chicago’s neoliberal aspirations as a creative class and gourmet food smorgasbord city resonate with Lemon’s examination of sociospatial mobility vis-à-vis culinary spaces in Columbus, Ohio.<sup>336</sup> Columbus and its relevant communities, desire to be seen as an urbanely forward, “cosmopolitan” creative class city, an “eccentric and entropic” image which its gourmet food trucks help build.<sup>337</sup> The sociospatial differences in the mobility practices of traditional and

---

<sup>331</sup> Siu, “Twenty-First,” 271.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 172-173.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 173; Siu, “Twenty-First,” 271.

<sup>334</sup> Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It is Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). Martin, “Food Fight!,” 1868-69.

<sup>335</sup> Wessel, “From Place,” 515; Geoff Dougherty, “Chicago’s Food Trucks: Wrapped in Red Tape,” *Gastronomica* 12 (2012): 63.

<sup>336</sup> Martin, “Why Regulations,” 212; Martin, “Food Fight,” 1868-69.

<sup>337</sup> Lemon, “The Spatial,” 174.

gourmet food trucks, contribute further to the layers of racial, class-based, gendered, and gentrified areas of consumption and production in Columbus's mobile food culture.

So far in chapter three, I have set up the theoretical impasse or the transformative interlocking space between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. I have discussed the productive and difficult spaces where the two disciplines tend to get stuck together while finding some wiggle room for mobility. In enunciating this impasse, I have focused on how both fields approach motifs of embodiment and materiality, particularly in their utilization of forms or patterns of experience to ascertain the palpability of everyday environments. But aesthetic and affective forms differ on account of their operationalization because Dewey and affect theorists orient toward matters of embodiment in different shades. For example, if aesthetic forms have a persuasive element for Dewey, in that they represent the art of making clear, affective forms come together in patterns, only to inject muddiness, difficulty, and painful labor into experiences. In other words, even though affective forms ascribe to a structure for making sense out of everyday experience, they need not fit into neatly pre-configured perceptions of time and space. Affective forms can be revolting, disgusting, retarding, or even have a bite to them. Both formal approaches still underscore the importance of the somatic in apprehending the day to day. After enunciating the theoretical aspects of the impasse, I have situated my fieldwork in the existing accounts of rhetorical field methods. After that, I have provided the historical, social, economic, and political context of the gourmet food truck market in North America.

Finally, I move on to the field where I investigate the failures, contradictions, challenges, and successes of my inter-disciplinary head butting. McKinnon et al.'s five-fold methodology (text, context, audience, judgment, and ethics), along with contemporary rhetorical scholars who

have taken rhetoric into the field, supports my field work in the food truck landscape of Austin, Texas. I add something more to the methodology I follow. As I go about my fieldwork in the following sections, I will recount my participant observations in the field. By referring to my field notes as experiential evidence I will explore important somatic habits, affective states, and aesthetic perceptions of everyday rhetoric, in relation with the life-affirming rhythms of Austin's food truck environment. Here I consider the aesthetic and affective dimensions of experience which help formalize life-affirming rhythms of gustation, its consumption, and production across McKinnon et al.'s five-fold methodology. In other words, by way of my field notes, I examine food texts, contexts, their audiences, my embodied modes of judgment, and the ethical perplexities undergirding our intertwined everyday experiences. For example, if I am discussing joy as a life-affirming rhythm in a discussion on the contextual aspects of food truck experiences, I observe the entailments of that particular pattern of experience. Likewise, I explore aesthetic and affective states which indicate a formal pattern of anxiety and disgust as a life-affirming rhythm around a food truck cluster. I also pay attention to other prevailing senses and their sensory forms of experiences which have the capacity to produce and/or destroy food-driven subjectivities. In addition to providing an experiential account of my embodied approach to this research, my field notes draw attention to a very important aspect of my work, which is a processual attention to navigational attitudes and orientations in the field. Processual attention mirrors a Deweyan and affective account of navigation, particularly emphasizing the literal and figurative importance of embodied detours of attention in the field. The following section will engage and explore the significant attitudes, orientations, and detours related to my fieldwork.

## TEXTS IN PRAXIS: AUSTIN'S FOOD TRUCK CULTURE

**Attitudes, Orientations, and Detours.** Based on my discussion on quotidian rhetoric thus far, food-related texts in an everyday live action cluster encompass several iterations of stationary or mobile food trucks, replete with their life-affirming rhythms, sensations, habits of spaces, traces, places, and faces around them. As part of the conceptual impasse, I started my fieldwork by walking in the direction of Austin, Texas, which felt most familiar to my feet, on account of where I have lived, walked, and written for the last four years: North Loop. Indeed, to channel the poetic or muscularly imaginative side of Burke, I consider my fieldwork rhythm, a *feet-first* orientation to quotidian rhetoric; this pedestrian-friendly, corporeal, and symbolic stance may be read as what Burke would call the “dancing of an attitude.”<sup>338</sup> A feet-first attitude is a rhythmically “implicit program for action,” with which to engage the integrative and inchoate acts of the everyday and the ordinary.<sup>339</sup> I find support in Petermann’s observations on Burke’s convoluted engagement with attitude. Petermann states, that for Burke, the concept of attitude, as it develops in his writing overtime, forges a connection between mental acts and somatic comportments.<sup>340</sup> Therefore, as both a playful orientation toward mental action and a rhythmic stance toward bodily motion, a feet-first attitude is ultimately an embodied research ethic. In this ethic, the body (à la Burke) “...dances, a corresponding state of mind, reordering the glandular and neural behavior in obedience to mind-body correspondences.”<sup>341</sup> Apropos of this Burkean attitude, I do my rhetorical

---

<sup>338</sup> Kenneth Burke. *The Philosophy of Literary Form, Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 9.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 143; Burke, Kenneth. *Late Poems, 1968-1993: Attitudinizing Verse-Wise, While Fending for One’s Selph, and in a Style Somewhat Artificially Colloquial*, eds. Julie Whitaker & David Blakesley (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 24-25.

<sup>340</sup> Waldermar Petermann, “Attitudes as Equipment for Living,” *The Journal of Kenneth Burke Society* 11, no. 1 (2015), [http://kbjournal.org/petermann\\_attitudes](http://kbjournal.org/petermann_attitudes)

<sup>341</sup> Burke, *Philosophy*, 11.

fieldwork at the intersections of the body-mind, mindful of the delicate interplay between both. In relation, I model Light's movement-based rhetorical methodology for assessing the affective, aesthetic, embodied, and emplaced pulse points of a sensory landscape, such as Austin's food truck scene.<sup>342</sup>

Before I develop my approach to fieldwork any further, I need to hold myself accountable to two contributing factors to my research process. First, I acknowledge the immense privilege behind my ableist premise, in conceptualizing a feet-first orientation or attitude to rhetorical fieldwork. I grant that my stance may be exclusionary or alienating to individuals with disabilities, or the ones for whom mobility may require other accouterments. Therefore, I do not assume that everyone identifies with the idea, or better yet has the physical capacity to access it. Nonetheless, based on my own socio-cultural, and economic location in the United States, a feet-first orientation is perhaps my most reliable mode of movement, transportation, reflection, and scholarship. I also realize that idiomatic implications of "feet first" are quite interesting. One idiom has a passive tone in which "*be carried out feet first*," means "to be removed from a place only after one has died."<sup>343</sup> I embrace this idiom's meaning to connote an *ethic of creeping persistence*, of moving slowing, with my body in close proximity with the earth underneath, something I strongly attribute to rhizomatic habits of experience.<sup>344</sup> Rhizomes bloom in dark subterranean spaces, and continue to re-connect laterally and non-linearly within spaces, precisely at the traumatically generative point of rupture, which separates them: "A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will

---

<sup>342</sup> Light, "Visualizing," 539.

<sup>343</sup> "Be Carried Out Feet First," *Farlex Dictionary of Idioms*. S.v, Retrieved March 12 2018 from <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/be+carried+out+feet+first>

<sup>344</sup> "Creep." *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. S.v. Retrieved March 20 2018 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/creep>



start up again on one of its old lines, or new lines.”<sup>345</sup> This creeping growth, which happens in the close company of morbid spaces, and mostly associated with burials and death is a rhizome’s playground and bloomspace. I embrace a rhizome’s playful expression of death and re-birth in its growth in the field and channel a similar ethic into my field work. I hope to be removed from my field work feet first (by forces of fatigue or some other field-based force bigger than me), only when the field has consumed most of my creeping persistence, on any given day.

I counter the field’s retarding force on my determination, with the second iteration of the feet first idiom, which has an active tone. *To jump in feet first* connotes venturing into something without much hesitation or fear.<sup>346</sup> So, I hope to jump in feet first on a brand new day, reset and re-plug into the life-affirming rhythms of Austin’s food truck scene, apropos of a rhizome, an ongoing creator and destroyer of short term memory. And, I hope to re-connect with my creeping persistence in the morbid space of separatist enervation: one of Austin’s several food truck hubs. Moreover, as a participatory approach to studying the rhetoric of commonplaces, akin to the work of rhetorical field scholars, a feet-first ethic is a representational re-invention, of performing critical embodied judgment.<sup>347</sup> I participate feet-first in the production of quotidian rhetoric around Austin’s food truck culture while offering a critical exploration of its life-affirming rhythms. I do not necessarily align my embodied approach to field work, with Hess’s idea of critic-as-advocate in relation to embodied practices of rhetoric.<sup>348</sup> I do model my feet-first ethic after his work on

---

<sup>345</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 9.

<sup>346</sup> “Jump in Feet First,” *Farlex Dictionary of Idioms*. S.v, Retrieved March 12 2018 from <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/jump+in+feet+first>

<sup>347</sup> Aaron Hess, “Embodied Judgment: A Call for Phronetic Orientation in Rhetorical Ethnography,” in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Methods* eds. McKinnon et al. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 87.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

embodied rhetorical judgment and benefit from his “rhetorical and material” articulation of advocacy, which he considers, “...a contest rooted in language, body, space, and time.”<sup>349</sup> I approach the study of quotidian rhetoric as a symbolic, embodied (aesthetic-affective), spatial and temporal impasse of contrapuntal rhythms, which feature stuckness and mobility, detours and dead ends. Finally, my proposed rhetorical field orientation is attuned to exploring the artful and sensory richness of everyday life in Austin’s food truck scene through Dewey’s ethical insistence on detours.

In *Art as Experience*, Dewey writes: “In order to understand the meaning of artistic products, we have to forget them for a time, to turn aside from them and have recourse to the ordinary forces and conditions of experience we do not usually regard as esthetic. We must arrive at the theory of art by means of a detour.”<sup>350</sup> A feet-first ethic as part of rhetorical field work is a way to bodily mind, several ordinary forces and typically anaesthetic conditions of experiences, which one (in this case, me) encounters on way to the field: several mental-emotional states and breath in relation with the life-affirming rhythms of an everyday environment, empty pavements and roads with varying traffic based on time/weather, the wafting sweet scent of the Texas Mountain laurel (nauseating to some I suppose), the slowly blossoming denuded trees, cigarette stubs, or trash. In the eagerness to attain the end, one mostly neglects the ethical means, that is our bodies, which constantly mediate this largely ignored and anaesthetic everydayness, in the pursuit of a desired outcome: for example, a food truck hub in some part of Austin.

My point is that a re-sensitization to the ordinary can also amount to a disorienting experience characteristic of a detour when one realizes how much they tune out in simply getting

---

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>350</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 4.

from one everyday place to another. Even if one walks the same road every day to get to a local coffee shop or to inaugurate the first node of fieldwork (as in my case), any re-direction to the self in relation with largely anesthetic ordinary processes of their everyday environments is a detour of attention to the body. With the help of detours (either literal or figurative), rhetorical scholars may momentarily desensitize the aesthetic end, by turning it aside and forgetting about it. In the paradoxical process of understanding the aesthetic, rhetorical scholars may jump in feet first as a creeping detour de force, which engages the senses with untreated quotidian phenomena: roots of an aesthetic experience in Dewey's articulation. Rhetorical scholars attain something substantial about the aesthetic roots of experiences, with the sensate patronage of quotidian detours. They learn to re-sensitize and reclaim their bodies-on-the-go, as powerful sensory touchstones for embodied research. This is similar to Danisch's incorporation of Schön's "reflective practitioner," idea—one who reflects-in-action and on action, akin to thinking on one's feet—feet-on-detour is an embodied techne, through which to do artful and reflective rhetorical practice.<sup>351</sup>

Becoming a detour de force on the field has a rhizomatic ring to it as well. An openness to detours in the field suggests a rhizome's way of growing and taking root. A rhizome has "multiple entryways," through which it makes a map with the world (i.e., connects), as opposed to a tracing, which tries to return to a home state<sup>352</sup>. By following different detours, the body-as-map can connect with the field through multiple entryways, and not worry about returning to an originary or fixed starting point of embodied research. Feet-on-detour move in a milieu of mindful and mindless steps, with which to recognize the linear economies of clock time, expand (even if momentarily) perceptions of time and space and stumble upon creative connections in research.

---

<sup>351</sup> Danisch, *Building*, 239-243.

<sup>352</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 12.

Thus, each creeping detour orients toward the multiplicitous middle (milieu) of nowhere. Each detour is an ethical step toward challenging and decentering the Platonic notion of bodily uprightness, which privileges verticality.<sup>353</sup> Bodily uprightness simultaneously devalues the lower ends of the body, which becomes a symbolic devaluation of “forgotten corners of the chassis—the corporeal Third World, its subaltern objects—[which] are not only divided from reason but opposed to it.”<sup>354</sup> Verticality corresponds to a “hierarchy of senses” in which senses associated with cognition and judgment are indubitably considered more valuable, than the ones considered inferior on the sensory spectrum (taste and smell for instance).<sup>355</sup> This is why, I re-direct attention to rhetorical fieldwork, through a lower end of the body, with which to distribute equitable somatic energy to all senses in one’s aesthetic and affective apparatus. I do so to re-claim the forgotten corners of the chassis, to re-possess the corporeality of the Third World, which my subaltern abject feet-on-detour embody in each creeping detour. Let feet be opposed to reason. They are rhizomatically connected to the earth, which is why it stands to reason that they can afford an acentered head.

With a dehierarchized head, one’s bodily movements have the generous capacity to be more whimsical, flexible, prone to getting stuck, and lost. Owing to the non-sovereign feet-as-detour de force, embodied research has the potential to be creative and anything but pedestrian, because of the fascinating ways, in which short-term somatic memory plays. It maps, retraces, forgets, destroys, and reproduces experiences in writing: “it merges not with the instant but instead

---

<sup>353</sup> Michael Marder, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 65.

<sup>354</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 121.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

with the nervous, temporal, and collective rhizome.”<sup>356</sup> Short-term somatic memory makes rhizomes with the street it took one day, or with the aroma wafting from another part of the street on another day, or with the aimless detour produced in following trucks moving back-to-back with serendipitous refrains like ‘*Be Creative.*’ and ‘*Shameless.*’ Indeed, a feet-first somatic/nomadic memory-map makes navigation in the field interesting, because it is “open and connectible in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, and susceptible to constant modification.”<sup>357</sup> Finally, I must confess, that a feet-first research style is my way of dancing a resistive attitude, against the well-adjusted speech-head (mostly cognitive) economies of our discipline’s beginnings in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A feet-first orientation is my performative counter-statement, toward understanding what it might mean to accrue embodied value in a wellness-attuned economy.

So far, I have offered insights into the attitudes, orientations, and detours I take in my fieldwork. Now, following McKinnon et al.’s five-fold structure, I present a rhetorical analysis of my fieldwork, in which different food truck *texts* in Austin, woven into their *contexts* and *audiences*, along with my *embodied judgment* and *ethical orientations*, mediate and modulate my participant observations. The rhetorical analyses based on my fieldwork in both of Austin’s live action clusters (major food truck spaces and SXSW) vary slightly from the rhetorical analysis of my media artifact (*The Great Food Truck Race*) in chapter four. In chapter three, I utilize my field notes as everyday and ordinary evidence of aesthetic and affective experiences, which I then unpack with the help of my conceptual and methodological frameworks, I have established in the preceding chapters. Chapter four, on the other hand, follows a fairly similar five-fold structure of rhetorical analysis, with a dedicated section to reflections based on the media artifact’s general

---

<sup>356</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 16.

<sup>357</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 12.

plot. Both these reflective sections based on the two live action clusters, contribute to highlighting the embedding of the body in everyday rhetoric.

## LIVE ACTION CLUSTER 1

### TEXT

**Field note 1.** The first chapter of fieldwork was the Vegan food truck cluster in North Loop Austin. The cluster features food trucks such as The Great Y\*All, Bistro Vonish, Zucchini Kill, and Bananaarchy. The vegan food cluster was tucked away in a little field on North Loop and Martin, against a constant backdrop of mobility, that involves ongoing road traffic and the zooming sounds of the vehicles. For my next food truck adventure to feature the body, its everyday affects, and quotidian rhetoric, I visited the South Austin Eatery and Trailer Park on Congress and 1<sup>st</sup> streets. While the first chapter of my live action cluster one was abuzz was activity, even on a cloudy day, the second chapter was a whole other story. My first trip here, ended up being more of a reconnaissance mission since I did not experience any foot traffic in this park on a Monday evening. My visit to a trailer park in the middle of rush hour on a Monday evening was everything but rushed, congested, and busy. I had hoped to experience a whole smorgasbord of hungry life-affirming rhythms. I was astounded by an almost empty park, with most trucks shuttered down, except for an open food truck called Conscious Cravings.

The introductory field note to my fieldwork based on Austin's food truck culture examines culinary spaces, where I witness in situ or naturally occurring quotidian rhetoric in their immediacy, primarily through embodied and emplaced participant observation.<sup>358</sup> To re-iterate for emphasis, an attention to such in situ quotidian phenomena is important because, for Dewey aesthetic inquiry commences "...in the raw; in the events and scenes that hold the attentive eye and ear of man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens: the sights that hold the crowd."<sup>359</sup> The Vegan food truck cluster of North Loop and the empty South Austin Eatery and trailer park are the inaugural spaces to my in situ culinary texts and contexts, which offer me a creative chance to pay attention to the everydayness of rhetorical discourses: the

---

<sup>358</sup> Endres et al., "In Situ," 512-516; McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 4-6.

<sup>359</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 3.

aesthetic and affective encounters of bodies and ecologies taking place in the raw.

Since, these culinary spaces are active, live, grassroots spaces, replete with everyday aesthetics and ordinary affects, or life-affirming rhythms as I have articulated earlier, these spaces are textually plastic. Their slippery yet inviting sensory richness infolds dynamic contexts, live audiences, interweaving practices of spatial and temporal embodiments, and the ethical implications owing to such complex movements in the field. Therefore, like I noted earlier in chapter three, based on Chávez's remarks about rhetorical field methods, despite the dull emptiness of a food trailer park on a given day, I cannot treat it as a lifeless text.<sup>360</sup> As a malleable culinary text, it is pulsing with the raw absence of the other field elements, which are always already infolded into its structure. As a rhetorical field researcher, I am accountable to register the life-affirming rhythm of the park's dull throbbing absence, and the vacuous anxiety related to production and consumption we share in relation. I take up my interchanges with this empty but alive text in richer details, through a discussion, which continues in the section dedicated to the food truck contexts in Austin.

**Field note 2.** Rainey street has several mini food truck clusters, which feature a range of sweet and savory cuisines such as Asian fusion, Indian, Mediterranean, Venezuelan, Gourmet Hot Dogs etc. Some of the prominent food trucks in one of the food truck clusters are Glory Hole (gourmet hot dogs), Sirena tacos, Four Brothers Venezuelan Gastro Kitchen, Fat Sal's sandwiches, Dawns Thai Kitchen, Happy Lobster truck, and Burro Cheese Kitchen (gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches). One of the other food clusters on Rainey Street features similarly themed food trucks such as Masala Dhaba Indian Kitchen, Fare Food Truck (gourmet hot dogs, burgers, and sandwiches), A Nepalese Momo (flour dumpling) truck, Big Fat Greek Gyros, I Love Tacos, and Yummy Thai Food truck.

Akin to my inaugural food narrative in the raw, the vast culinary diversity of the food truck

---

<sup>360</sup> McKinnon et al., "Rhetoric and Ethics," 563.

clusters at Rainey Street in Downtown Austin speaks to the cosmopolitan popularity of gourmet food truck cuisine in Austin.<sup>361</sup> Most of the food trucks in their host spaces on Rainey street embody a quirky, hip, creative, gentrified, aromatic, colorful, and technologically savvy vibe, something that the existing literature on the North American food truck market corroborates.<sup>362</sup> These aesthetic and affective markers of haptic, gustatory, olfactory, ocular, and aural sensations are the textually plastic access points to understanding the rhetorical everydayness of “people, places, events, material culture, and the digital milieu...” within Austin’s food truck scene.<sup>363</sup> With such sensate indices of everyday experience, I along with other bodies and ecologies participate in the production, circulation, disposal, and reproduction of the everyday rhetoric related to Austin’s food truck culture. For instance, on a visual account of the trucks’ high-tech culinary and transaction accouterment, hip downtown Austin location, and the gustatory promise of eclectic food fare for the well-seasoned American middle class, I can declare the following with confidence. Rainey street food trucks and their host spaces are far removed from the immigrant-*huckster* owned traditional taco trucks or *loncheras*, which primarily serve immigrant Mexican populations.<sup>364</sup> And, if the food trucks serve ethnic Venezuelan, Thai, Indian, Nepalese, Asian fusion, or Mediterranean cuisine, their olfactory, visual, and gustatory appeals to ethnicity are in the neoliberal service of portraying Austin as a creative class city, which is welcoming of diverse creative young professionals, who get the seductive appeal of gourmet cuisine.<sup>365</sup> Furthermore, the popularity of gourmet ethnic food is an invitation to enterprising *trucksters*, who may want to

---

<sup>361</sup> Irvin, “Constructing,” 46; Siu, “Twenty-First,” 267; Wessel, “From Place,” 514.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.; Lemon, “The Spatial,” 169; Trivedi-Grenier, “Food Trucks,” 634.

<sup>363</sup> Sara L. Mckinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 4.

<sup>364</sup> Agyeman et al., *Food Trucks*, 3.

<sup>365</sup> Martin, “Food Fight!,” 1868.



enrich Austin's diverse and creative image further, through cosmopolitan food innovation.<sup>366</sup> In that sense, the same culinary texts act as contextual forces, which shape (and are shaped by) producers' and consumers' co-participation in and co-production of different bodily comportments, affective states, and aesthetic modes of everyday perception.

## CONTEXT

**Field note 1.** I have walked on the roads leading up to the Vegan food truck cluster of North Loop for about 4 years now. So, my walk did not promise any new exciting sensations. However, I felt a sense of thrill, anxiety, fear, and joy because I was about to approach my familiar environs with a slightly different orientation. I did not know what to expect, except for the televised production of the food truck culture I have been experiencing simultaneously, on *The Great Food Truck Show*. After about a 40-minute walk, I got my first glimpse of the Vegan food trucks at North Loop. I was amused by a self-realization, that I may have to purchase something at each food truck cluster, I visit to blend in a bit better with the crowd, else I am just a creepy onlooker taking notes on my laptop. It is worth it though. Research has never felt more palatable. I also thought it might be ethical to convey to the food truck owner from whom I bought my cinnamon roll and coffee that I might take pictures of his truck. I tell him this fact so that he does not think I am creepy. I am also a bit more hypervigilant about the socio-political climate in the US these days, and more aware than I have ever been of the body I inhabit. So, I took a sip of my coffee and a bite of my cinnamon roll with an all too bendy fork that does not make reflection and consumption easy for me. I still mulled things over in the presence of fresh coffee, and the aroma of a cinnamon roll wafting through my nose (The *Great Food Truck Race* sort of primed my tongue to recognize some of the food items).

In re-tracing steps to the contextual aspects articulated in rhetorical field methods, I understand more clearly how an embodied and experiential approach to scholarship muddies clean boundaries among my culinary texts and contexts.<sup>367</sup> While the Vegan food truck cluster in North Loop is my text, it is also a kairotic site as far as context goes (apropos of Hess), since it embroils my own local and contextual knowledge about the area: my body knows North loop like the back

---

<sup>366</sup> Agyeman et al., *Food Trucks*, 3.

<sup>367</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 9-10; Senda-Cook et al., "Interrogating," 25.

of my hand.<sup>368</sup> Despite the opportune knowledge, and the fact, that I have ambled back and forth in this location for the last four years, re-tracing steps on the same everyday pavement, leading up to this cluster, produces an unexpected aesthetic and affective encounter with the ordinary (typically anesthetic) sights and sounds of an environment. Yet, in walking up to the cluster, I become bodily aware of how my feet-first attitude of research, overlaps with an everyday pedestrian experience, which is why I embody my local and habitual knowledge of the North Loop context a little differently. So, I would add the following to Hess's kairotic account of local and contextual knowledge vis-à-vis a rhetorical scholar's embodied performance of critical ethnography. It is a somatic shift, the re-sensitizing detour of attention in an everyday orientation, which renders the context opportune. Owing to this detour of attention to an otherwise known yet anesthetic local context, I or anyone else might experience different bodily affects and emotions in the old process of examining a new aesthetic end of a gustatory field. And this is exactly the embodied particularity, my feet-first attitude and orientation to fieldwork adds to the contextual aspect of fieldwork.

While a somatic awareness accents the contextual knowledge of a culinary text, the food truck field itself conjoins with culinary context to assert its rhetorical force as a rhetorical place. The Vegan food truck cluster, the empty South Austin Eatery, and the vibrant food spaces at Rainey street act as agentive rhetorical places which act with, against, and alongside the rhetorical practices and performances happening in situ.<sup>369</sup> Together we co-produce and co-participate in Austin's food-based everyday rhetoric. For instance, the rhetorical power of the Vegan food truck cluster which marks it as a space of gustation, and features sensate refrains of food production and

---

<sup>368</sup> Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical," 138-140.

<sup>369</sup> Senda-Cook et al., "Interrogating," 24-25.

consumption, the place expects certain kinds of behaviors from its participants. Furthermore, as rhetorical places with food as a powerful mediating context, these food truck clusters are transformed into what Dickinson et al. call memory places.<sup>370</sup> Food truck parks do not embody the traditional attributes of national memorials or museums, yet they are spaces rich in cultural sensations, ordinary affects, and everyday aesthetics revolving around culinary production and consumption. So, they do co-produce a cultural public memory and a collective identity around food. That's why as a pedestrian who is also examining the local food truck culture, I want to fit in, be a part of the Vegan food truck cluster's collective identity and purchase food in a food-based environment.

When I write, that I do not want to be flagged as an out-of-place onlooker taking notes, I am bodily aware of how my transnational self, my bodily comportments, and actions, might violate the rhetorical place, which acts alongside the rhetorical practices, that is the bodily habits of the visitors accustomed to the pace of the food truck space. The self-amusement that I might need to spend money at most food spaces is just a bodily deflection from the social penalty I fear, from an imagined transgression. Similarly, I feel ethically compelled to communicate to one of the food truck owners about my photographic intentions. All of this means, that my body registers how the rhetorical place might act against me if I did not juxtapose my notetaking with an ordinary rhythm of consumption, a rhythm which is nonetheless attuned to the general life-affirming rhythms of production and consumption in the food truck environment.

**Field note 2.** The silence of the South Austin Eatery and Trailer Park was life-affirming, because, in the absence of consumers who would mediate our encounter, the trailer park and I, we were two awkward strangers struggling to find a milieu to connect. I didn't stay at the vacant South Austin trailer park for too long. I walked for about thirty-five minutes

---

<sup>370</sup> Dickinson et al., *Places*, 25.

south east (even though I do not navigate the roads purely based on direction, but actually short-term mnemonic landmarks, my feet, and detours) to the Rainey Street food truck lot. It was an exciting walk because I was familiar with some Austin landmarks, and to find detours to them in the capacity of a researcher on a mission, felt thrilling to me. I felt like a detour de force many a time. The Rainey street area has a very vibrant sensation to it, just the very moment one enters its vicinity. Perhaps, it is the combination of several tinsel lights, music emanating from different restaurants, along with familiar aromas of the inebriated afterword.

As I noted in the textual aspect of this analysis, I was unable to observe any foot-traffic at the South Austin Eatery and Trailer park on a weekday and Pangea lounge on a holiday weekend, which is why I didn't spend as much time there, as I did at other spaces. Even Rainey street food trucks told a similar story. However, since, the overall area is brightly lit and feels energetic, the food truck spaces did not look and feel as dismal at the South Austin Eatery and Pangea lounge. Akin to my reflection on the agentive and landscaping rhetoricity of rhetorical places such as the food truck cluster of North Loop, I spent enough time at these spaces to acquaint myself with their rhetoricity. We did find a milieu to connect. And what is the mid-placed connection in the apparently lifeless face of an awkward and silent encounter with a food truck field? The connection is the bodily registry or somatic recognition that a field devoid of foot-traffic and no matter how dull and dreary in the absence of consumptive and productive rhythms has its own life and life-affirming rhythms. The park as a rhetorical place acts alongside our encounter to project a silent anxious emptiness as an experiential context, (a kairotic somatic awareness of silence, anxiety, and emptiness) on to me. As a pedestrian researcher partaking of its dull and blasé everyday rhythm, I register the discomfiting silent context of my empty culinary text. I consider this adventure, a field-based failure, rich with aesthetic and affective perceptions of physically empty rhetorical places. Yet, my unexpected detour to a vibrant Rainey Street with mostly shuttered down

food trucks on a Monday evening, also reminded me that a rhetorical place's rhetoricity has a temporal aspect to it, which exerts a different force on the body. Regardless, I absorbed the vibrancy of Rainey Street as best as I could, so as to ink my culinary palimpsest, with traces of my short-term somatic memory, while mapping new ones on my gustatory field, when I would re-visit Rainey street for a second time. As my analysis subsequently reveals, the same food truck clusters at Rainey street would act against my rhetorical practices in the field on a Sunday evening, in the context of the life-affirming rhythms called anxiety and disgust.

Of course, it is impossible to go any further with the body in everyday experience, without having recourse to the ordinary conditions of experience of an organism with her environment, their biosocial pace of interchanges, which I have articulated as life-affirming rhythms throughout this work.<sup>371</sup> In Austin's food truck context, life-affirming rhythms refer to bodies' and ecologies' (self-included) disparate habits of embodiment, their corresponding affects, emotions, bodily comportments, and excitations within different culinary spaces of food production and consumption. I focus on three main aesthetic and affective patterns of experience in the first live action cluster: joy, anxiety, and disgust. Wherever it is possible in observation and analysis, I also discuss the aesthetic and affective dimensions of habits.

**Field note 3.** I observe people interacting with each other through moments of play, laughter, the repeated use of the word "LOL." In fact, I run into a person, who I also see a lot in my neighborhood coffee shop and third place, Epoch. So we smile at each other in recognition. While waiting in line for their food orders, some individuals hold each other in loving gestures or lean in to have a private moment.

---

<sup>371</sup> Allison Hayes-Conroy and Jessica Hayes-Conroy, "Visceral Difference: Variations in Feeling (Slow) Food," in *Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World*, eds. Psyche Williams Forson and Carole Counihan (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 516. Accessed April 4, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.

**Joy.** Based on Nietzsche's writings in *The Gay Science* or *Joyful Wisdom*, I approach joy and its everyday patterns of experience, from a Nietzschean sense, for whom joy is all but a monotone uplifting feeling.<sup>372</sup> Joy has the reversible capacity for carrying sub-affects, whose roots are felt, the moment any one affect saturates itself in a body. For example, a moment of profound happiness will be tinged with an intertwined feeling of sadness, because the labor that produced such happiness is bound to regress the feeler to experience the hardships, which were inseparable from the labor. Indeed, Nietzsche reminds us to be aware that we cannot compartmentalize, the range of affects, the body will eventually feel in desiring joy: "...whoever wants to learn to jubilate up to the heavens must also be prepared for grief unto death."<sup>373</sup> In other words, if joy means willing the highest degree of affirmation, then it implies automating or habituating one's peripheral nerve structure to will the highest degree of pain.

As a researcher of quotidian rhetoric who is trying to study joy in an emplaced and embodied capacity in an extremely ordinary food truck environment, it is hard to imagine that joy could indeed be as complex as Nietzsche writes about it. But, perhaps its subtle palpability merits an attempt at understanding joy, in the context of the aforementioned field note. Generally, joy becomes the aesthetic and affective in-between, in which a careful attention to another person's moments of fun, laughter, or happiness, will always contain a wistful residue, which reminds one of the empathetic price one must pay for embodying joy. The intensity of feeling in that wistful residue is directly proportional to the intensity of joy one feels. For instance, in the food truck context, I smile when observing friends sharing carefree moments of laughter with each other, or

---

<sup>372</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and An Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro (poems) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 38.

<sup>373</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay*, 38.

spouses/significant others holding each other as they wait in cue, in the midst of their consumption patterns. Similarly, I laugh by myself at the over usage of an expression “LOL” (laugh out loud). In all such ordinary contexts of everyday experiences where people communicate and share their lives through the sensate medium of food, joy is one palpable life-affirming rhythm, a connecting milieu of several sub-affects. When I affirm light-hearted and ordinary moments of play among friends or simple expressions of love among individuals as joy, I also affirm the piercing presence of a wistful residue; it is a somberly alive residue which reminds me of my sentient capacity of somatic participation in another person’s levity and their consumption habits without needing to physically undergo the same experience. This is not envy or a feeling of lack but a somatic recognition of other-oriented attention in joy which is why joy always carries a tinge of sadness. Cixous’s notes on joy are similarly complex. She notes: “Suffering and joy have the same root. Knowing how to suffer is knowing how to have joy in suffering. Knowing how to enjoy is knowing how to have such intense joy that it almost becomes suffering. Good suffering.”<sup>374</sup> My sensory memory of ingesting the cinnamon roll and coffee, which I bought at the North Loop vegan food truck cluster is bodily intertwined with the gustation experiences of others enjoying their time together. But, the intertwining is anything but simple; it is an affirmative memory of joy as an other-oriented pattern of experience, of the good life as actually good suffering.

Brinkema reads Nietzschean joy as a formal structure and an ethical orientation.<sup>375</sup> Nietzschean joy “affirms” the “repetition” of “*every* (not a) certain something,” including fragmentary and “indeterminate instances, moments of flux and becoming...,” states of despair,

---

<sup>374</sup> Cixous and Calle-Gruber, Hélène Cixous, *Rootprints*, 12.

<sup>375</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 244.

desuetude, and especially its own “negation.”<sup>376</sup> To affirm joy as an ethical orientation is to will the eternal return of all that comes through the door and not “just-once”: conveniently or linearly.<sup>377</sup> So, joy reminds us of our ethical capacity to take detours of attention to the self’s capacity to relate to others, as in a food truck context, so in everyday life, which is why it is a complex pattern of experience as Nietzsche writes. Formal joy affirms itself as “precisely where the something (all prior and future possible) in fact, indeed actually takes place.”<sup>378</sup> And, the fact that Nietzschean joy thrives repeatedly on the highest degrees of affirmation and pain in concert, pronounces the formal attributes of joy.<sup>379</sup>

**Field note 4.** In between, interactions, individuals pay attention to their pets or play with them, stroke them lovingly to add to and disrupt the flow of the conversation. Two friends seem to be enjoying viewing something on one’s phone, but they are involved in the activity together and laughing. They appear mindful of their time together. I also notice that the consumers of the Vegan food truck clusters are more focused on food and conversations, as opposed to technology. At least, I do not observe technology alienating consumers from one another, as I have observed in most social gatherings at some point or another. Finally, no food or music scene is animated or Austin enough, if it is not punctuated with the all too discordantly familiar sound of a grumpy grackle perched on a bare tree.

Akin to Cixous, perhaps Dewey had a similar root in mind when he proclaimed that the roots of the aesthetic are in everyday experiences. An organism and its environment are related because of their shared cubic capacity, their common aesthetic root of suffering and joy, the delightful perception of which, can translate not into living the good life, but living life mindfully as a good suffering, experiencing the immediacy of life in all of its heavenly tastes, hellish flavors, and all the in-between senses. As my visit suggests, I sensed a similar mindful attention in the

---

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 244-246.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.



Vegan food truck cluster visitors toward food, toward each other, their non-human companions, and technology. Their habits of attention toward their pets, or consumption, whether it pertains to food or technology, communicated an equitable distribution of somatic energy. This is why Dewey locates the roots of the aesthetic in the everyday. An aesthetic experience is a body's and ecology's capacity to co-produce those paces of experiences, those habits of somatic attunement to the everyday, through which one learns how to have joy in suffering, and to enjoy at a pitch, that joy becomes a good suffering, i.e. through habits of mindfulness.

As a researcher participating in embodied modes of observation and attempting them to practice them mindfully in the process, my aesthetic experience at the food truck cluster also entails an ethical and rhizomatic infoldment of some non-human sentient refrains, which imbue Austin with its distinct character and body. Austin has its own unique life-affirming rhythms, because of the diversity of human and non-human sentient refrains, that pass by unnoticed in its vibrant backdrop. For instance, the unpleasantly persistent sounds of the grackle, a local bird, made my experience at the food truck cluster more memorable. I realized that its irritating sonic interruption and visually swollen form co-produces and contributes to the aesthetic appeal of a food truck cluster in Austin. A grackle's presence shatters human perceptions of mindfulness as a bodily mastery because of how easily its discordant cawing veers one toward inattention and mindlessness. Perhaps, this is why it is ethically important that the human body learn to register such non-human refrains habitually. Non-human refrains nod ever so silently (well except the grackle) and affirm the human need to have recourse to our sheer ignorance about the democratic capaciousness of living. Ultimately, to affirm the lively repetition of every joyful certain something as in a food truck context so in life is to will mindful living as a good suffering that the grackle's

life-affirming and humorous presence co-creates in an environment from time to time. And now, moving on from joy, in the following cases I take a more specific look at anxiety and disgust as aesthetic and affective patterns of good suffering, in Austin's food truck context.

**Field note 4.** It is Sunday evening and I am back observing the food truck lot in Rainey Street. I am amazed at how much difference temporality adds to space: this is precisely rhetoricity of the space at play. During my last visit on Monday evening, this space was dead with its aliveness. But, tonight, I can really bear witness to the hype surrounding the Austin's food truck scene. The place is abuzz with plenty of activities. In fact, one of my first predominant feelings, when I entered Rainey street was that of overwhelming panic, because the vibrant sensations of the space were too over-stimulating for my mostly solitary, and quiet seeking self. I heard a voice in my head: "This is so not your scene!" But, I am also excited to step out of my comfort zone, because this everyday experience, seems like a compelling index for testing out one's bodily and cubic capacity in the field. Rainey Street's bar scene definitely informs, shapes, and enhances the food truck culture here. In fact, traces of alcohol are Rainey street's most prominent olfactory salutations to my overwhelmed nostrils. The pervasive smell takes on other bodily forms, as it weaves in and out of bars with live music, dance music, people catching up with each other, interacting with technology, making room for pets, lost to inebriation and found in its unfortunate side-effects: vomiting.

I am still reeling from a spontaneous encounter with someone, as I was sitting and observing the rhythms of a food truck cluster at Rainey Street. I didn't know that my laptop would render me so conspicuous on a relatively empty picnic table until a fairly inebriated someone just came over and asked if I was doing research. I told them I was, but also that it wasn't something creepy. My anxiety shoots up in such moments because I am immediately brought back to the bodily space I occupy in the US. This person told me repeatedly that I was amazing. I didn't understand the context, but I felt their vulnerability, in being so out of control, so on the verge of throwing up and communicating with me. Since, I am not imbibing alcohol, or enjoying the space in a typical way, the space and its inhabitants immediately other me. I feel extremely exposed because I do not even have any food shield, with which to cover my social anxiety.

**Anxiety.** What are the formal dimensions of anxiety? What do patterns of everyday experience involving anxiety feel like, particularly in Austin's food truck context? Brinkema associates anxiety with a diffuse, "wooly" or amorphous objectlessness.<sup>380</sup> This is why it is difficult to pin down, this erratic bodily affect which does not interrupt movement, but suggests

---

<sup>380</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 184.

“troubled movement, strangled, frayed, worked-over movements.”<sup>381</sup> Anxiety’s formal structure corresponds to a process of churning, one which heightens the feeling of the anxious nothing which is yet to unfold in the spatial and temporal course of events in the food truck context.<sup>382</sup> My second field note on Rainey street food truck clusters communicates bodily anxiety which I registered as soon as I re-visited the space on a weekend. Did I feel anxious on account of the perceived sensory overstimulation at a particular time? Or was it because I was technically in a party space, all by myself, which made me feel out of character, physically limited and over-exposed at the same time, as opposed to other folks who were embodying the space in a completely different capacity than me? Brinkema attributes “the form of intermittency” to time-related labored motions. Anxiety’s intermittent forms are related to painful or helpless repetitions, which oversupply a squeezed perception of time (instead of halting it).<sup>383</sup> This means that anxiety compresses, chokes, and churns one’s embodied and material perception of time into repetitive labored motions or “difficult movement.”<sup>384</sup> My inability to locate the source of anxiety’s pattern of experience at Rainey Street, or predict what was to come in the food truck environment is how one registers this erratic affect: a bodily repetitive churning of difficult movements such as shallow breathing, heart palpitations, and ironically enough, a choking loss of appetite in a space overflowing with culinary options. To foreshadow my observations in chapter four about feelings of hunger in an anxiolytic context, readers would notice a marked contrast between experiencing anxiety in the field, as opposed to the manufactured and controlled context of a media artifact such as *The Great Food*

---

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>382</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 194.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>384</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire X: L’angoisse (Anxiety) 1962-63*, trans. Cormac Gallagher from unedited French typescripts. Unpublished seminar transcript, quoted in Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 187.

*Truck Race.*

Moreover, as I had noted earlier about the agentive and landscaping power of rhetorical places particularly based on temporality in this specific field iteration, Rainey Street acted as a countervailing rhetorical place during the weekend. It conjoined with the anxiolytic oversupply of a perceptual time squeeze, to act against our encounter, further exacerbating my troubled movements. However, there is a spatial paradox to the temporal constriction of anxiety, which is that one feels confined or choked because of too much space (the over-stimulating weight of the entire food truck space), not too little.<sup>385</sup> It is the sheer cubic capacity of one's sensoria in relation with an immediate environment, which abets and exacerbates the anxiolytic structure of a time squeeze. Spatially speaking, anxiety creates a sense of "drowning," in "a gaping space" such as "the wide open water of the sea."<sup>386</sup> Along the dimensions of space, anxiety manifests in the "form of embarrassment,"<sup>387</sup> In terms of producing spatial disturbances, anxiety embarrasses, humiliates, and humbles bodily dispensations.<sup>388</sup> When considered together, anxiety's temporal and spatial forms imbue its experience as "a humiliating difficult movement."<sup>389</sup> And, this is exactly what I meant when I told myself: 'this is so not your scene.' I was just embarrassed to inhabit a party space, in a non-conforming capacity, which surprised me, because that is what comes naturally to me in most social spaces: a wallflower. But, the countervailing rhetoricity of the rhetorical place, was so overpowering that I could not help embodying the time and space in humiliating difficult movements of feeling completely dispossessed. Finally, my unexpected encounter with a slightly

---

<sup>385</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 200.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 187.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 201-202.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 202.

inebriated person communicates the spatially embarrassing disturbances that anxiety produces. My anxiety shot up in that immediate food space because I was embarrassed at having been caught red-handed about taking notes on my laptop in a space, where such an activity makes no sense on a weekend. The same bodily worry of being perceived as a creepy onlooker crept on to my persistent feelings of embarrassment and humiliation. However, anxiety's intermittent and embarrassing repetitions are what make it *uncomfortably pleasurable*. Anxiety acts as a life-affirming rhythm of everyday rhetoric, one which punctuates time and space to feel choppy, labored, panicked, asphyxiating, or shameful, but painfully alive with a vivid sense of what is missing in feeling the aforementioned way. The humiliating difficult movement of anxiety and the choking feeling of a time squeeze on too much space are invitational detours of bodily attention to living mindfully as good suffering: building the bodily capacity to jubilate up to the heavens, and the preparation for grief unto death. If not that, an introvert's humiliating difficult movements as evidence of embodied research in a chaotically countervailing downtown Austin space, can serve as a cautionary tale for similarly pre-disposed rhetorical field scholars. With the anxiolytic can of worms already open, I suppose there is no harm in discussing what the aesthetic and affective experience of disgust entails in culinary landscape.

**Disgust.** What of disgust? How does it manifest as an aesthetic and affective pattern of experience in the food truck context of Rainey street? First of all, as a pattern of everyday experience, disgust seems radically opposed to Dewey's idea of an aesthetic experience, a balanced delightful perception related to everyday enjoyment. But, that is why I need to discuss disgust as an excessive appetitive experience in a culinary context. Disgust threatens the body's aesthetic balance, by perverting the body's physical and perceptual limits of consumption, with "a shattering

pleasure,” or the *jouissance* of coming uncomfortably close in “giving far too much enjoyment.”<sup>390</sup> Without disgust’s “anti-aesthetic labor,” I cannot expand (and perhaps shatter) Dewey’s unified notion of the aesthetic.<sup>391</sup> If disgust truly has been the aesthetic other in Western philosophy, it is time to infold this abject pattern of experience into living mindfully as good suffering.<sup>392</sup> As an affective form, Brinkema attributes a sense of mutability and “formal potential” to disgust, which connotes disgust’s “wild movements and the energetic liberating qualities...”<sup>393</sup> However, she adds that disgust’s affective form lacks immediacy, in that one needs to “read for disgust.”<sup>394</sup>

I unpack Brinkema’s preliminary argument about disgust in reference to my unexpected and discombobulating encounter with an inebriated person at the vulnerable precipice of vomiting and communication, in the Rainey Street food truck cluster. In our bizarre interchange, the person’s disorientation and my ill-timed sobriety, respectively rendered our “zones of proximity” a little too comfortable for them, while threateningly close and uncomfortable for me.<sup>395</sup> The person was a little too comfortable to ask me questions and call me amazing repeatedly without adequate context which triggered my anxiety about my transnational status in the field. Call it cynicism, or an attunement to racial micro-aggressions, but I have come to understand the stereotypical quip about “smart Indians,” more as an act of exoticized othering, as opposed to a genuine compliment. At the same time, I could sense that my cynicism was getting displaced by their dizzying movement, which was moving into familiar territory: the head-spinning effects of alcohol, which in most instances are relieved through the consumption of something absorbent, and eventually

---

<sup>390</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 128.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>392</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 124.

<sup>393</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 117.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 131.

the disgusting phenomenon of vomiting. Despite our muddled up zones of proximity, the life-affirming rhythm of disgust in that encounter was not as simple as one would imagine. In my interchange with the field, disgust's formal experience of an appetitively excessive wildness entailed a perpetual movement, which kept shifting its formal nauseating structure to something more than itself.<sup>396</sup> At one point, disgust became a curious embodiment of shared vulnerability, which is why I agree when Brinkema says that one must read for disgust. Even though the person did not vomit (but their friend eventually did), I remained rooted to the spot. I could not escape the vertiginous force of our encounter, because it manifested as a very raw, vulnerable, and life-affirming moment of coming so close to the disgusting aspects of living as good suffering. Disgust decidedly disorients a traditional Deweyan sense of contemplative and pleasurable balance in aesthetic experiences. The former's affective excess is precisely the rhizomatic rupture needed in Deweyan aesthetics though. Through an efferent detour of attention to disgust's anti-aesthetic labor, everyday habits of participation and communication under bodily duress can be infolded into the aesthetic. In doing so, an aesthetic experience becomes a more capacious mode of embodiment, unwilling to be deprived of the experiential otherness (the shattering pleasure of disgust), which threatens the very conditions of its possibility. My discussion on life-affirming rhythms in Austin's food truck context, with particular references to the aesthetic and affective patterns of joy, anxiety, and disgust, now lead us to the co-producers of and co-participants in the said rhythms. As an audiencing and feeling rhetorical critic, I now present the aesthetic and affective patterns of audience appeals in food truck spaces, which enable and constrain the spaces in constituting diverse production and consumption identities.

---

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 132.

## AUDIENCE

**Field note 1.** The Vegan food truck cluster at North Loop features mostly people, but there are also pets and babies in the mix. The audience of the vegan food truck cluster is consistent with the research on food trucks: predominantly white, quirky, hip, urban, young consumers, with a speck of transnationalism (including the fingers that write these reflections). Since this is a Vegan food cluster, I assume that most people eating here are either Vegan or relate to the diet in some way. As I drift in and out of conversations, trying to be ethical about not eavesdropping purposefully, but just tuning in mildly with my senses, I notice that conversations range from personal relations to racism and travel. It is a cloudy Sunday afternoon in Austin, and I notice that the Vegan food truck cluster is buzzing with a lot of organic activity and foot traffic. The food truck cluster as a field has its own force on the ones partaking of the food offerings here. It is a little cold today by Austin's standards. I see people sitting huddled up closely with each other. The owner of Bistro Vonish is thoughtful enough to light up an open-air heater, and I notice that the consumers look more comfortable. Bistro Vonish has lively jazz music playing in its food backdrop, and somehow that placates the moodiness of the day.

**Field note 2.** At Rainey Street, the food truck cluster features a more racially diverse population than the one in North Loop. The cluster features The range of food trucks also has more regional and transnational diversity. In the food truck melee, I find people on their phones, texting, snap chatting, and instagramming moments. The pervasive iMessage bubbles are quite the sight to behold. Rainey street is a sensory smorgasbord of tattoos, moments of intimacy, play, and pets.

At the Vegan food truck cluster in North Loop, I noticed one of the more pronounced patterns of audience appeals in Austin's food truck landscape. Apropos of the culinary thematic, the appeal pertains to the production and consumption of vegan foods and beverages. In the immediate and everyday context of life in Austin, veganism is quite common, as a dietary preference. The city boasts many vegan-friendly neighborhood grocery stores, cafes, restaurants, clothing stores, and coffee shops. In 2016, Austin was placed eighth in (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) PETA's list of ten most vegan-friendly cities in the US, compared to its



top position in a 2013 PETA survey.<sup>397</sup> In 2017, in a survey of the 100 most vegetarian and vegan friendly US cities, Austin came in at number thirteen.<sup>398</sup> Austin's position in such surveys may vary with the years. The fact that it is constantly reckoned as a vegan-friendly city with plenty of non-meat options makes this dietary preference a popular consumption practice and identity. At the same time, a Vegan diet has important aesthetic and affective implications for the sort of identity, production and consumption practices, Austin's food truck culture, and its consumers communicate. Griffin describes veganism as both an identity marker and a practice, which attempts to validate bestial life, and uphold bestial rights, by giving up meat, dairy, eggs, and other animal based products such as "wool, leather, and honey..."<sup>399</sup> As a dietary practice, veganism often gets othered in meat-centric dietary circles, which is why it is a queer, alternatively inclined, or non-normative mode of food consumption.<sup>400</sup> Borrowing from Sara Ahmed's notion of affect aliens, Twine observes that meat-eaters project an "affective awkwardness" to vegans because vegans "introduce a sense of embodied questioning, a discomfort to the habitual normativity of meat culture."<sup>401</sup>

---

<sup>397</sup> Nicole Raney, "Meat-loving Austin named top city for vegans? Better believe it," *Culturemap*, accessed April 7, 2018, <http://austin.culturemap.com/news/restaurants-bars/04-22-16-peta-top-10-vegan-friendly-cities-2016-austin/>;

<sup>398</sup> Brandon Watson, "Austin declared one of America's most vegetarian-friendly cities," *Culturemap*, accessed April 7, 2018, <http://austin.culturemap.com/news/restaurants-bars/10-18-17-most-vegetarian-vegan-friendly-cities-wallethub/>

<sup>399</sup> Nathan Stephens Griffin, *Understanding Veganism: Biography and Identity* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 6-7. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-52102-2.

<sup>400</sup> Jessica Beth Greenebaum, "Questioning the Concept of Vegan Privilege: A Commentary," *Humanity & Society* 41, no. 3 (2017): 363.

<sup>401</sup> Richard Twine, "Vegan Killjoys at the Table—Contesting Happiness and Negotiating Relationships with Food Practices," *Societies* 4, no. 4 (2014): 631; Sara Ahmed, "Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness," *Signs* 35, no. 3 (2010): 581.

I agree with Twine and argue further that a vegan identity and practice produces an aesthetic and affective disruption in everyday consumption. For instance, I personally experienced the disruption when I ordered coffee at Bistro Vonish in the Vegan food truck cluster. I was presented with a soy milk only option along with my coffee. I have no issues with the choice of creamer in coffee. But it is the gustatory, visual, and haptic textural absence of an everyday accessory like cream/half and half which my body registered as a disruption of an otherwise forgotten consumption habit. Despite its empathetic stance to animal rights, the practice is complicit in its own institutionalized culinary racism, which enables visibility of “middle-class” white vegan cultures at the expense of marginalizing vegan practices of other racial groups.<sup>402</sup>

Harper corroborates my charge and acknowledges the need for a racially conscious discourse on veganism. She argues that mainstream media discourses related to veganism are “far from race-neutral,” because they lack a conscious reflection on the intertwined impact of “racial privilege (or lack thereof), food knowledge, and place...”<sup>403</sup> She further notes: “The way vegans in the USA think about a moral food system cannot be separated from the places and spaces that they have been racialized within; hence these epistemologies are racialized and vegan epistemologies are no exception.”<sup>404</sup> Greenebaum concurs, that everyday discourses around US vegan cultures must expand their “circle of compassion” to include those bodies and ecologies, which are “disenfranchised by the industrialize food complex.”<sup>405</sup> In the context of my fieldwork, it is the embodied practices of the producers and consumers, which provide the habitual and

---

<sup>402</sup> Griffin, *Understanding Veganism*, 10.

<sup>403</sup> A Breeze Harper, “Going Beyond the Normative White ‘Post-Racial’ Vegan Epistemology,” in *Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World*, eds. Psyche Williams Forson and Carole Counihan (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 155-156. Accessed April 4, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>405</sup> Greenebaum, “Questioning,” 366.

sensory indices of spatial racialization at the North Loop vegan food truck cluster. The indices include a “chill” vibe at the truck, the laid back attitude of the environment and its co-participants, a truck’s choice of a particular kind of jazz music in the environment, racial hyperawareness in everyday conversations, cosmopolitan discussions on travel or economic policy, or visitors’ anthropomorphizing attention to pets. Vegan food is the quotidian medium which gives one a chance to observe the sensate refrains of living vis-à-vis a particular kind of dietary practice, identity, and related communicative habits.

In comparison, Rainey Street food trucks portray a more exuberant and extraverted side of Austin. At the same time, Rainey Street also showcases the consumption performances and practices of Austin’s culinary communities which thrive in these spaces: conspicuous consumption of eccentric food combinations, a flair for world food, a desire to be perceived by acquaintances and friends in the same hip, cool, and seasoned food consumer light. Alongside the food trucks, alcohol consumption within the Rainey Street bar-scene makes alcohol a pervasively acute, olfactory register of experience. This sensory register is more sharply palpable when someone like me does not participate in the space because of an anxiolytic reaction to the anti-aesthetic labor required of embodied research in the Rainey street food space. Despite putting my best foot forward amid the food truck space, the vague dispossessed state of ‘feeling off’ never felt ironically more at home. I was out of pace with no sense of place. However, given the festive chaos of the space, I did get to observe how technology melds with bodies, food, modes of consumption, bodily comportments, and emotions. Consumers of the post bar-scene food truck spaces celebrate the intoxicating madness of the intertwined spaces themselves, with hot and delicious food, in a *commemorate-as-you-go* style. All the live tweets, Instagram posts and life stories, Facebook

updates, iMessage bubbles, and android flashes are a sensory testament to Downtown Austin's sparkling presence. And, since the space contributes to an almost rabid energy, perhaps alcohol consumption is a better (overall depressant) way to be more attuned to the surroundings. But, I state that at the risk of sounding irresponsible or insensitive to those who do not imbibe. So, I will revise my position and state that the food truck culture at Rainey Street is for those brave souls, who can keep pace with the endless soiree of Austin's culinary and nightlife experiences, and enjoy the whole sensory smorgasbord as a dynamic milieu of mindlessness and mindfulness. On the other hand, as a lily-livered embodied co-participant, in what I came to perceive as the quotidian rhetoric of cruel-paced culinary cultures, the rampant materiality and consumerism of the space, only pronounced the ephemerality of everyday experience. As an audiencing rhetorical critic, I have just enumerated the scope of bodily engagement (and its lack thereof) in some of Austin's major food truck hubs, through their textual, contextual, and audience based patterns of experience. The common thread in these enumerations has entailed a bodily knowledge (mine in relation with the co-participants in a common food environment) of the everyday spaces, with which to make rhetorical judgment. The next section illustrates the successes and pitfalls of embodied judgment within Austin's food truck context.

## **JUDGMENT**

**Field note 1.** While I was excited to visit Rainey street as an unexpected detour, because of an earlier failure in the field, one of the food truck clusters in Rainey Street, told the same silent story: shuttered food trucks and no significant foot traffic. I called this trip, my second reconnaissance mission of the evening, and just decided to call it a day on field notes. Visiting the Pangea lounge on a Sunday evening food truck cluster on East 6<sup>th</sup> was an even bigger disaster, because it was completely shuttered down, and felt hauntingly empty. After wasting my Uber fare, and returning home empty handed, I realized that I went for my field visit on an Easter Sunday. This would be another crowning jewel in the quotidian rhetoric of empty texts and their life-affirming contexts.

**Field note 2.** On a Sunday evening, Rainey street is abuzz with plenty of activities. In fact, one of my first predominant feelings, when I entered Rainey street was that of overwhelming panic, because the vibrant sensations of the space were too over-stimulating for my mostly solitary, and quiet seeking self. I heard a voice in my head: “This is so not your scene!” Strangely enough, in a with so many food options, I seem to have lost my appetite—but I am hopeful it will return at some point.

In existing scholarship on rhetorical field methods, scholars address a balance of power between rhetorical critics’ sovereign judgment and their accountability to the field itself. As I have noted earlier, this balance of power may be addressed when critics have recourse to their own bodily comportments, an attunement to their own feelings in research, and performative modes of absorbing the field. Therefore, I too utilized the temporally-specific and lackluster foot-traffic of the South Austin Eatery, Rainey Street, and Pangea lounge food trucks to focus on the embodied and emplaced contexts in which I do my fieldwork, which is a feet-first attitude, an *embodied rhizomatic ethic of creeping persistence*. Owing to this ethic, I decided to walk on feet-first from South Austin Eatery to Rainey Street. There are multiple entryways to the world, because of which, when a rhizome gets disconnected from one entry, it finds another exit to connect with the world: open, detachable, reversible, modifiable.<sup>406</sup> I decided to savor the patience-testing process of moving, from one failed encounter toward another hopeful one. Of course, by the end of Monday evening, I would realize the futility of visiting food trucks on a weekday. Research-based futility is a safety-valve that manages researcher’s accountability, humility, and the bodily limits of experiential research. But a future-focused orientation in a disembodied denial of the present moment is not how (or at least try to fail at or contradict most of the times) I practice this embodied particularity.

---

<sup>406</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 12.

On my way to Rainey Street, I experienced something similar to the experience of walking up to the North Loop Vegan food truck clusters for the first time, despite having walked on the path itself for over four years. As I mentioned in my field note pertaining to the Rainey Street food trucks on a Monday evening, some of the downtown areas were already familiar to me, and some new. Yet, I would categorize my thirty-five-minute walk as another detour of attention to my body making mindful and mindless maps with the downtown environments. As expected, the detour of attention re-sensitized my body to the ordinary downtown vistas, the setting sun on a calm and lucid lake. However, it also helped me imagine becoming a *detour de force* in the field, in a moment where I was trying to take a picture of a sole shoe with the downtown lake in the background. In this sense, even though my walk to the Rainey Street food trucks was ultimately futile from an observational point of view, an ordinary detour of attention actually shifted my aesthetic end from a food truck hub to a multiplicitous milieu of play and creativity. My body was able to absorb the sights and sounds of the downtown area, to actually conceptualize something, which would contribute to what I consider an embodied particularity in rhetorical field methods. Later, I would realize that becoming a feet-first-detour de force is a rhizomatic resistance against the head's vertical "authority as a center of intelligence, the sovereign decision-making organ presiding over the organism, and the radial point from which everything properly human emanates."<sup>407</sup> As a caveat, I must offer that this creative account may sound absurd or perhaps not as theoretically sophisticated to some or most rhetorical field scholars. However, this encounter serves as my best attempt to recount the ordinarily emplaced, affectively and aesthetically embodied, experiential contexts of fieldwork related to everyday rhetoric.

---

<sup>407</sup> Marder, *Plant-Thinking*, 65.

In addition to a rebellious feeling of adventure, there is a significant challenge in depending on embodied inferences of the field. To that end, I re-visit my experience from an abridged field note, which I had utilized to underscore the life-affirming rhythms of anxiety in the field, in the context of critical judgment. For instance, despite the liberating feeling of navigating the field through creeping feet-first detours in the radical quest to challenge vertical thinking, the freedom still cost me my appetite in the field. My loss of appetite in a food space seems totally counter-intuitive to a research which requires my co-participation in the consumption practices. Without an account of my consumptive engagement with the field, how do I critically and ethically evaluate the aesthetic, affective, and communicative aspects of life-affirming rhythms in Austin's food truck landscape? No practice of mindfulness could bring back my appetite in the space. Since I could not hide behind any consumption practice (mindful or otherwise), I felt humiliatingly conspicuous, a flailing tour de farce. I am fraught. But, perhaps this loss of appetite as an embodied disenfranchisement is a sharp indicator, of my critical non-sovereignty, through which the balance of power in a culinary field of investigation is restored. Perhaps, my embodied disenfranchisement in the field is exactly the sort of critical-artful performative self-portraiture, Morris encourages in critically engaged, provocative and powerful rhetorical scholarship.<sup>408</sup> Because, of my humbling realization, which implicates an embodied participation on my end, now re-frames my rhetorical analysis of the media artifact in chapter four in a completely different light. The chapter four analysis reveals the difference of intensity in which the field's immediacy acts on the limits and capacities of the body, as opposed to interacting with a media artifact at a delightfully perceptual distance. The promises and disappointments of my embodied research, in *in situ* food truck spaces

---

<sup>408</sup> Morris III, "(Self-) Portraiture," 33.

of Austin, communicate something important about the body's capacity to be an ethical touchstone for rhetorical criticism. Yes, both positive and negative feelings are fleeting, but they demonstrate the bodily capacity of sensitivity, rhetorical scholars can weave in to their ethical and political acts of criticism. With a similar orientation of embodied sensitivity to everyday spaces of food production and consumption, I discuss the final section of my fieldwork: the ethical entanglements of participatory research with questions of power, truth, relationality, and representation.

## ETHICS

To recall the work of rhetorical field scholars on the ethical implications of rhetorical criticism, a researcher's ethical responsibility cuts across her texts, contexts, audiences, and embodied modes of evaluations.<sup>409</sup> Having an embodied awareness of this ethical responsibility at each step of the fieldwork works to balance the power dynamic between the critic's argumentative agency and the community that is represented. In my fieldwork on the food truck clusters of Rainey street, I have observed the food community which I could perceive with my sensorium. Yet, an ethical orientation to fieldwork compels me to dig further and investigate the unrepresented socio-spatial histories intersecting with the current avatar. Rainey street is an interesting site for participatory research because it appeals to the aesthetic and affective registers of a particular audience, as I have just articulated. Sadly, the visibility comes at a developmental cost which the sparkling nightlife narrative of Rainey street hides in plain shimmery light. What remains unsung in the hyper-hip space is Rainey street's rampant gentrification for the urbane consumer, looking to have fun in a cool, hip, and creative class city like Austin.<sup>410</sup> Lavy, Dascher, and Hagelman

---

<sup>409</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 18.

<sup>410</sup> Brendan L. Lavy, Erin D. Dascher, and Ronald R. Hagelman. "Media Portrayal of Gentrification and Redevelopment on Rainey Street in Austin, Texas (USA), 2000–2014." *City, Culture and Society* 7, no. 4 (2016): 198.



trace the geographical transformation of Austin's "Rainey Street Historical District" between the years 2000 to 2014: "The Rainey Street neighborhood, once a low-income majority Hispanic neighborhood, has been transformed through rezoning efforts and entrepreneurial enterprises into Austin's newest nightlife district."<sup>411</sup> Since Rainey Street is also home to old school ("early-to-mid twentieth century") architecture, its romantic appeal explains why many enterprises would want to partake of the street's cultural heritage, and charm the current generation of consumers through a delicate combination of old and new.<sup>412</sup>

I agree that through an engaged assimilation into current businesses, cultural recovery and preservation keep a city's historical spirit alive. I also do not believe that the populace that migrated out to another part of the city was simply a victim to the process of gentrification because wherever there is power, there is also resistive resilience. But what is the cost of this resilience and who eventually pays for it? Within Rainey street's gentrified smorgasbord of sensory eclecticism, I reflect on the price of bodily erasures, historical amnesias, and representational re-configurations of different bodies and ecologies, embedded in such reconstructive measures. Perhaps, a recognition of layered and fraught histories, cultural differences and erasures, in the immediacy of a deceptively simple celebratory space is the ethical imperative of a rhetorical field scholar and critic. Or as I have noted before, perhaps this recognition is precisely what Pezzullo considers a vulnerability to feel a sense of loss, love, anger, and so much more, within the contradictions, failures, and (mis)recognitions of immediacy.<sup>413</sup> The aforementioned are my ethical missteps toward the everyday rhetoric related to Austin's food truck culture, quite impossible without the

---

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Pezzullo, "Afterword," 181.

bodily detours of attention to the representational politics of a social space.

My rhetorical fieldwork in Austin's food truck landscape, which I presented as my first live action cluster, helped me account for the aesthetic and affective emplacement of food in relation with the body in everyday spaces such as food trucks. I follow the culinary themed map of everyday rhetoric to examine the body in a food truck space "SouthBites® Trailer Park" featured exclusively, at an annual Austin event, *South by South West (SXSW)*. It must be noted, that food production or consumption is not central to SXSW by any means, even though the festival does feature conferences and panels related to food businesses and practices. However, given the subtle embedding of food in the sort of festivity SXSW embodies, and presents to its consumers, this celebratory yet ordinary context of everyday gustation became my second live action cluster. The rhetorical analysis related to the second cluster entails observations parallel to the general food truck culture in Austin. Points of divergence from the first cluster may be attributed to the rhetorical force of the SXSW context at large.

## **LIVE ACTION CLUSTER 2: SOUTH BITES TRAILER PARK AT SOUTH BY SOUTH WEST (SXSW) FESTIVAL**

South by South West or more popularly known as SXSW is a sprightly rendezvous of music, film, conferences, technology, and interactive media, which takes places in Austin, Texas every spring (specifically during March 2018 in this research). The festival traces its conceptual roots to the year 1986, when the current managing director of SXSW Ronald Swenson, "booking agent Louis Jay Meyers, *Austin Chronicle* publisher and cofounder Nick Barbaro, and *Chronicle* cofounder and editor Louis Black" joined hands to open up Austin's local musical economy to

similar talents elsewhere in the world.<sup>414</sup> The first SXSW music festival was held in March 1987, while the festival's format expanded to included interactive and filmic media in the year 1994<sup>415</sup>. In 2018, SXSW is now in its thirty-first year. According to Swenson, SXSW has experienced several dissonant and consonant "paradigm shift[s]" in its evolution from 1987.<sup>416</sup> The constant in the SXSW melee, however, is the fact that "SXSW remains a tool for creative people to develop their careers by bringing together people from around the globe to meet, learn, and share ideas. (And maybe have a few once-in-a-lifetime experiences)."<sup>417</sup> Over the years, Austin's "countercultural and anticommodification" perception has helped the city sustain its refrain of *keeping things weird*.<sup>418</sup> In the spirit of keeping things weird, Austin has been able to solidify its image as a cool, hip, and creative city, a cultural magnet with an "indie cred," with which to draw in creative indie acts from all over the globe.<sup>419</sup> In fact, it is Austin's perceived and projected weirdness, which contributes to Austin's image as a "creative class" city, and its paradoxical business strategy of promoting local businesses.<sup>420</sup>

Drawing on Austin's creative and quirky attributes, SXSW manages to attract musical, technological, and media-based talent, which thrives on its own weirdness. SXSW is not technically a food festival, yet mundane life-affirming rhythms of food production and consumption, create a persistent culinary field and context in its creative economies. No wonder

---

<sup>414</sup> Jonathan R. Wynn. *Music City: American Festivals and Placemaking in Austin, Nashville, and Newport* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 132; "History Intro," SXSW, accessed March 15, 2018, <https://www.sxsw.com/about/history/>

<sup>415</sup> SXSW, "History Intro."

<sup>416</sup> Ibid.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Wynn, *Music*, 135.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>420</sup> Wynn, *Music*, 133.

SXSW features its dedicated food trailer park called SouthBites® Trailer Park, which is currently in its sixth year.<sup>421</sup> This food trailer park is located in Downtown Austin, at the lively intersections of Driskill and Rainey streets, the latter already contributing to an important Austin food truck cluster, as my rhetorical analysis based on my fieldwork demonstrates in the previous section.

Now, it is time to move on to my second live action cluster, the food scene itself at SXSW, but not without an interlude in the form of an ethical and embodied detour of creeping persistence. In the ensuing rhetorical analysis, I follow the same five-part methodology of identifying the texts, contexts, audiences, critical modes of judgment, and my ethical commitments, in evaluating the everydayness of rhetorical discourses around SXSW. I also weave in my conceptual impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory to engage my observations from the field, following the same structure of analysis, which I utilized for my first live action cluster.

**Interlude to live action cluster 2. Field note 0.** My goal for observing the life-affirming rhythms of the food truck scene at SXSW 2018, was to start with the SouthBites® Trailer Park. The law enforcement personnel had been neatly cordoned off the main area around the SXSW convention center in Downtown Austin, which meant lots of barricading and rerouting for vehicles. But, temporary rerouting regulations for SXSW had immediate implications for my body in relation with its immediate surroundings because I had to walk for a little while before I could get to the SXSW food truck cluster at the South Bites Trailer Park. On way, I came across the Austin Convention Center (ACC), a space with very high population density, even for a Saturday afternoon coinciding with UT Austin's spring break and the general vibrancy of Downtown Austin over the weekend. I would attribute the hubbub around ACC to SXSW and its several attendees. There were two food trucks parked right outside the ACC, with throngs of people (mostly attendees) gathering around eagerly to consume freshly prepared food.

---

<sup>421</sup> "About," SouthBites® Trailer Park, accessed March 15, 2018, <https://www.sxsw.com/exhibitions/southbites/>

## TEXT

SXSW afforded me a chance to observe the life-affirming rhythms in an embodied bulk of ordinary affects and emotions, because of the large numbers of people who attend the festival from all over the world. As I have articulated earlier in chapter three, I tried to practice the Deweyan ethic of taking detours as a mindful way of suspending the aesthetic endpoint. Consequently, I ended up reaching my primary research location The SouthBites® (henceforth SB) Trailer Park, via detours. I also had pragmatic reasons for taking detours, just like several others on route to the festival. For SXSW, The Peached Tortilla and Redfin would be my first two embodied and emplaced texts of understanding the life-affirming rhythms of a film, interactive music festival such as SXSW. The curious question, however, is the following. How do food trucks and their trailer park hosts, factor into the creative context of Austin's SXSW festival? What is their collective appeal in the hip, cool, and indie vibe of SXSW?

First, unlike Austin's geographically distributed food truck landscape, SB at SXSW invites a more spatially and temporally concentrated scope for examining the aesthetic and affective dimensions of *in situ* or "naturally occurring rhetoric" through the methods of observation.<sup>422</sup> Second, let us recall some of the attributes associated primarily with the North American gourmet food truck market. These include consumer perceptions of food truck eclecticism, quirky food combinations, a flair for cosmopolitanism, artisanal creations, relatively cheap and freshly prepared food-on-the-go. Siu corroborates my observations: "Known for their food innovation and urban hipness, with a nod to counterculture, food trucks coincide with the general ethos of SXSW's

---

<sup>422</sup> Endres et al., "In Situ," 516.

alternative culture.”<sup>423</sup> It is almost as if SXSW co-participates with Austin’s food truck scene to produce just the exact affective-aesthetic texts and contexts, which amplify their shared fresh appeal to audiences from the world over.

**Field note 1.** It is a late Friday afternoon at SB trailer park, but I do not observe a lot of foot traffic. People can move around the park as they consume the food. I see cozy make shift sofas for customers at some places. Briggos Coffee Haus boasts automated coffee dispensation. Most food trucks have social media handles and associated hash tags: #eatarepa, #eatdifferent four brothers eg. Most trucks advertise their wins and accolades on their trucks: Peached tortilla, Chilantro, Happy lobster.

SB offers catering space to participating food trucks, with adequate dining space for SXSW attendees and the local Austin population. The food trucks are accessible to people with the SXSW badges as well as the general population. The park features both local and outstation gourmet food trucks, some of which include returning businesses and new talents.<sup>424</sup> During SXSW 2018, SouthBites® hosted Bodhi Diet Vegan Cuisine, Briggo Coffee Haus, DFG Noodles, Four Brothers, Ghost & Grits, Happy Lobster, Kebabalicious, Lick Honest Ice Creams, mmmpanadas, Noble Sandwich Co, Ranch Hand, Tamale Addiction, and The Waffle Bus.<sup>425</sup> Food business that were not featured in the trailer park, could still avail of its hot strategic location and parked their trucks outside the trailer park. Since most food trucks maintain interesting social media profiles/handles (eg: #eatarepa, #eatdifferent, *Four Brothers* food truck featuring Venezuelan food at SB trailer park), and allow their popularity to proliferate through creative grassroots strategies, consumers can weigh in on their favorites in a more democratic fashion, and tell others about the hottest food truck experience.<sup>426</sup> Food trucks thus leverage the power of the ordinary to flatten the

---

<sup>423</sup> Siu, “Twenty-First,” 275.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> SouthBites® Trailer Park, “About,” accessed March 15, 2018, <https://www.sxsw.com/exhibitions/southbites/>

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 272.

rhythms of production and consumption, while allowing ordinary food enthusiasts to critically evaluate their food experiences for other interested consumers.

## CONTEXT

**Field note 1.** What is the power of a SXSW badge? It makes certain spaces more accessible to the participants than to the rest of the crowd. But, I can sense its presence within food spaces too, especially for SXSW volunteers, who can claim free food, when they get their barcode scanned. An example is Glory Hole, the gourmet hot dogs food truck. SXSW is an enterprising avenue, which forges networks of businesses, technologies, and participating bodies. Different outliers, a homeless person talking to himself, interrupts the smoothness of this space where everyone knows several conversational styles. Kids. Puppies, people working out, running, predominantly white, but also some international visitors, happening around Hilton Austin. Socio-economic status and explicit class interests. A melee of technology, production, consumption, ideas, style, glamour..people taking selfies

SXSW is not my immediate field of investigation, but it is the host field for the food truck scene I explore. It provides the sensory texts and discursive accounts of culinary practices in its contextual capacity as a host field which is why I first discuss its rhetorical dimensions. Similar to the different food truck spaces in Austin, SXSW acts as a “rhetorical place,” which exerts its persuasive force on the different life-affirming rhythms, bodily habits, affects, and sensations abounding among the badge-wearing SXSW attendees, places, spaces, technology, interactive media, and sources of nourishment such as food trucks.<sup>427</sup> SXSW’s rhetoricity varies temporally and spatially. For instance, as an overstimulating hubbub of sights, sounds, smells, and tastes it looks and feels different on a hot Saturday afternoon, as opposed to a cool Tuesday evening. For example, there could be more foot traffic around food trucks during the day, when attendees are moving quickly from one conference or panel discussion to another. In the evening, the bar scene might enliven the music and film consumption, while food trucks transform into a background

---

<sup>427</sup> Senda-Cook et al., “Interrogating,” 25.

post-drinking alimentary source, replete with post-alcohol after-tastes, after-sights, and after-sounds bordering on disgust.

As Senda-Cook et al. write: “Considering the field as a rhetorical place recognizes its dynamic, polysemous relationship with rhetorical action.”<sup>428</sup> As a field and rhetorical place, SXSW acts as an electrifying nexus of creative activity and best practices in business innovation. Its counter-cultural and dynamic brand value is constantly and polysemously in relation, with its aforementioned participants and their rhetorical actions, within and beyond the scope of SXSW. To make my argument more specific, let us imagine someone’s sheer thrill of sharing via social media, their experience of SXSW’s cool and hip factor. The thrill includes but is not limited to wearing the SXSW badge as a proud proof of conspicuously consuming and networking within, one of the most cutting edge film, music, and interactive media festivals in the United States.<sup>429</sup> The thrill might include listening to/chancing upon the latest indie bands, trying the hippest nitro float at a South-by coffee roasters conclave, having a beverage at the most happening bar on Rainey street, or eating afterhours at a quirky little food truck at a SXSW food truck lot. SXSW can easily be perceived as the mecca where hipness experiences rebirth. Who can deny the rhetorical powers of counter-cultural and non-mainstream identification with this mecca?

In other words, SXSW is a rhetorical force in its own right which embodies “the convergence of place, bodies, sounds, [tastes], [smells], and ideas that are accessed experientially through co-participation.”<sup>430</sup> Different participants register this force on their bodies in different haptic, olfactory, gustatory, aural, and ocular capacities. They communicate about such quotidian

---

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> Catherine Clifford, “Why Entrepreneurs Say SXSW is Still Worth the Crowds and Traffic,” accessed April 4, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/08/why-entrepreneurs-say-sxsw-is-still-worth-the-crowds-and-traffic.html>

<sup>430</sup> Senda-Cook et al., “Interrogating,” 24.



experiences through different symbolic and extra-symbolic comportments. As a more specific example, Siu attributes the burgeoning popularity of Austin's Asian-fusion food truck business Chi'Lantro, to a smart utilization of the SXSW buzz, including its persistent attention to "the youth culture embedded in music and technology."<sup>431</sup> Chi'Lantro's social media reckoning during SXSW in 2012, catapulted its popularity to the extent, it has received glowing mentions from several news and food media including "The Food Network, the Cooking Channel, the *New York Times*, Fox News, GQ magazine, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and CNN."<sup>432</sup>

However, as is characteristic of any industry experiencing hype and growth boom, there is always an undercurrent ready to undermine that growth. Reeves reflects on Austin's saturated food truck market in 2018, particularly in reference to the recent shuttering down of Torchy's Tacos food truck in South Austin trailer park.<sup>433</sup> The SXSW hype might have helped food truck businesses such as Chi'Lantro and Peached Tortilla to establish themselves as key players in the burgeoning food truck market in 2012. But, the situation in 2018 is very different, since there are more vibrant locations for food trucks to compete, which thin out foot traffic in formerly prominent places.<sup>434</sup> Business saturation is not the sole point of woe for Austin's food trucks. Even participating in SXSW's SouthBites® trailer park at an outrageous cost between \$4000-\$10,000 is merely a promotional sliver of hope and less about food trucks' popular appeal in the hip SXSW context.<sup>435</sup> The discussion in the preceding section has illustrated how SXSW acts as a powerful

---

<sup>431</sup> Ibid.

<sup>432</sup> Siu, "Twenty-First," 275.

<sup>433</sup> Kimberly Reeves, "Are Austin Food Trucks Coming Off the Menu?," accessed March 17, 2018, <https://www.bisnow.com/austin-san-antonio/news/state-of-market/could-the-food-truck-business-in-austin-be-toast-86145>

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Reeves, "Are Austin's Food Trucks?"

rhetorical place, which shapes and is shaped by the food truck scene in the SouthBites® Trailer Park. I have also shed a brief light on the effects of business saturation on Austin's food truck market, which tends to offset SXSW's power as a rhetorical place. Now I focus on the embodied context of field work, which features a discussion on the most prevalent life-affirming rhythms at the SouthBites® trailer park.

**Field note 2.** It is the first weekend of SXSW. The postures of consumers at SB food trucks are interesting. Heat challenges one's gustation rhythms of how to eat in all the heat. Can one be bodily attentive to just food at SXSW when there is so much stimulation? I have no appetite as usual, but decide to cool off with ice cream. Some food trucks have a no cash policy and only accept cards. I am back at the South bites food trailer around 7 pm on a weekday Less foot traffic in the seating area. This time, I decided to have music mediate my experience of the stimulation: an attempt to distribute stimuli in a more equal way. I think that works because I feel less overwhelmed. I see relatively less folks with badges. I am still not too curious about eating food. There is something about the orientation to food in hushed spaces. The pace of gustation is irksome to me. What is the kind of attention that such spaces encourage in consumers? Less foot traffic at some food trucks. Most people are on their phones. Technology is ever pervasive in food environments. Some people are only engaging with food. I have the same appetizer at DFG noodles. But, that's the portion of food I can bring myself to eat. Enjoying the food more this time. Heat still affects consumption. There is a breeze and place where to place the makeshift food plate. Important to gustation ergonomics.

**Life-affirming rhythms at SouthBites® Trailer Park.** In the life-affirming rhythms of production and consumption within SB, there is something to be said about the postural aspect of the exchanges among producers and consumers, which appear more heightened, since, most of the food trucks within SB inhabit the same space. Most food trucks have their on-site kitchens at a certain height from the ground for understandable reasons of hygiene and safety. However, when one observes the dispensation dynamic among food truck owners and consumers, an interesting postural pattern appears. I could say that one observes a persistent bodily labor (even it is a labor oriented toward sensory satisfaction) in food truck spaces than in a more relaxed setting like a

brick and mortar restaurant. In a sense, the bodily labor seems amenable for an able-bodied person, who is able to stand on her or his feet while placing and receiving orders at the food truck, as opposed to an individual with movement related disability. Even though I imagine that a food truck producer would service a physically challenged consumer, the physical construction of the food truck demonstrates an unconscious inclination toward able-bodied consumption, particularly in fast moving spaces such as SXSW.

While body comportments around food truck spaces communicate the postural orientations embedded in consumption practices, I need to account for some environmental factors, which can retard or augment bodily engagement with food. Here I have the rhetorical force of SB as a rhetorical place in mind, except that this time alongside its temporality and spatiality, there is also a thermometric mediator of food consumption, which seems to co-opt the retarding rhetoricity (in my experience) of the food truck space. As readers can glean from my notes, I constantly refer to the Austin weather, particularly the enervating heat, which seemed to appear out of nowhere, to contribute to an unexpectedly warm SXSW weekend. The sunny brightness of the day definitely enlivened the processes of participant observation. Yet, I was constantly curious about how heat was affecting my visceral response to the food trucks, as opposed to other visitors, who definitely seemed to enjoy food more than me. Furthermore, since the food trailer park was quite busy during the afternoon, I could not understand how one might enjoy food in such hushed spaces, with the already overwhelming seating space at capacity, and exhausting heat zooming in on the stand-around tables available for visitors. Given the mobile context of SXSW, and people's needs to quickly navigate from one event to another, the eat-as-you-go, go-as-you-eat layout of the space seems adequately ergonomic. Yet, a standing posture of consumption correlates with less bodily

attention to the process itself, as opposed to the object being consumed, which renders the activity fairly unhealthier than a sit-down meal.<sup>436</sup> I struggle to make a visceral sense of this situation, which the upcoming encounter of two cultural events rendered even more out of control.

**Field note 3.** It is evening time on the last day of food trailer park at SXSW 2018. South Bites and St. Patrick's day coincide to produce a sensory overload. The madness and exuberance of Rainey is through the roof: nuclear fusion of SXSW, St. Patty's day and Rainey Street. An explosion of sensations. There are lots of shades of green, so vision is definitely titillated. The food trucks don't have predominant St. Patty's day themes. Do I even dare enter Rainey street today? The swaying people feel overwhelming to me. I have no appetite at South Bites trailer. As usual. A thousand different smells are exploding and invading the body. Most people look happy. Once again, I resort to music to mediate my bodily rhythms in relation to the park. Alcohol is a pervasive smell. I see less people with badges. People also take bites from each other's food. Moments of intimacy. My observations are saturated at this point. I sense the limits of my body and temperament. Fear. Anxiety. It is so easy to talk about Rainey street, but I am petrified. It's too overwhelming go experience the intensity of this collective life-affirming rhythm of St. Patty's day celebration. I feel out of place. The infectious food energy, sounds, and smells feel disgusting to me. Long queues for food inspire an indefatigable sense of fatigue. Funny.

The ordinarily epochal date of March 17, 2018, conjoined two experiential contexts. One pertained to SXSW and second one to the Irish cultural festival, St. Patrick's Day. Within the combined powers of these two over-sensate biosocial paces of experience, SB, its producers, and other consumers appeared to synchronize with two overlapping rhythms of SXSW's hipness and St. Patty's old-school yearning for "community and craft."<sup>437</sup> It was a jarring and arrhythmic experience for me since I was not able to enjoy the consumption experience at all, feeling the anxiolytic oversupply of a perceptual time-squeeze through the embarrassing difficult movements of my spatially evicted body. Or as Ahmed would offer, in my bodily estrangement from a

---

<sup>436</sup> Sara Ipatenco, "Is It Better to Sit or Stand While Eating?" *Livestrong.com*, accessed April 4, 2018, <https://www.livestrong.com/article/491625-is-it-better-to-sit-or-stand-while-eating/>

<sup>437</sup> Doug Freeman, "St. Patrick's Day and SXSW: The collision of 2 Austin Traditions," *The Daily Dot*, accessed April 6, 2018, <https://www.dailymail.com/irl/jameson-st-patricks-day-sxsw/>

popularly sanctioned cool and hip culinary space, I became an “affect alien” at the food trailer park, and even on way to the field.<sup>438</sup> Similar to my anxiolytic response to an over-stimulating Rainey street on a regular Sunday evening, the enervating heat enabled just the sort of anesthesiologically constraining experience, I needed to have to become shamefully enlightened about the physical and psychological limits of my body. And, if the heat was not enough for the realization, the sensory bombardment I registered, under the celebratory auspices of two popular social events, definitely affirmed my worst fears about rhetorical fieldwork. Gone was my feet-first bravery of a detour de force. All that remained was the disgusting anti-aesthetic labor of experiencing the affective extremes of quotidian rhetoric. Atop my sensory mountain of woe, I also experienced a dawning sense of a culturally different pace, which I expect from my everyday consumption practices. I wondered if my response to heat would be different, had I been attending SXSW and consuming food at the food trailer park in a different capacity. Would I be able to mind the space and actually enjoy the experience more, if I were on some imagined panel discussion? In that scenario, food would just be a bodily detour to a quick nourishing accessory, ironically a mindfully acquired mindless orientation, required to adapt one’s bodily comportment in such chaotic spaces. Listening to music while observing the field definitely helped in re-distributing some of the clogged up affects I was sharing in my interaction with the space and other bodies.

**Field note 4.** I stumble upon an Australia live band called Lime Cordiale at the Australia house, on Rainey street, right next to some other food clusters, right next to Lucy’s donuts. This is an interesting combination of overseas textures in music combined with food. One of the hoardings at the Australia house features the picture of an animal, that looks an awful lot like the mischievous and sometimes very demanding Austin squirrels. I do a quick google search to locate this Australian creature, called quokka. With its eyes full of mischief, the quokka draws me in within all the chaos.

---

<sup>438</sup> Ahmed, “Killing,” 581.

**Field note 5.** Despite the presence of so many people, this is one of the loneliest research experiences for me. I feel dispossessed from the body. I see a dog with St. Patty accessories, which is endearing and soothing. I go back to the Nepalese momo truck for grounding. Habit. A few children at an adjoining food truck table are having fun with food trucks. I see them playing and pointing to dishes on a truck. They are laughing and really enjoying food. No technology. No gadgets.

In my encounter with SXSW, the thermometric and ergonomic gustation context of SB trailer park might have contributed to life-affirming rhythms of distress, disgust, and anxiety over and over again. While such anesthetic and affectively draining encounters do not result in moments of delightful perception, they nudge the body in the direction of attentive respite through the sentient and often silent presence of non-human life-affirming refrains, especially when the encounter is unexpected. In this case, I am referring to chancing upon a sweet canine donning St. Patrick's day accessories or the picture of a local Australia animal called "quokka," juxtaposed to a list of band performances on the G'Day USA (A US based US and Australia "public and economic diplomacy program") Australia House® hoarding on Rainey Street.<sup>439</sup> The quokka, "a herbivorous, macropodid [Australian] marsupial" could easily be the Austin squirrel's next of kin.<sup>440</sup> Keeping my slushy sentimentality aside, I am fully aware that I sound naïve when I believe that the organizers' mere placement a local animal's pictorial reduction does much to protect the animal's interest, except just further the country's business interests to expose the SXSW audience to "the very best of Australian innovation, film, music, food, and wine."<sup>441</sup> But through SXSW's

---

<sup>439</sup> "The Program," G'Day USA, accessed April 6, 2018, <http://www.gdayusa.org/about/>; "Event Description," G'Day Australia House @ SXSW, accessed April 6, 2018, <http://www.gdayusa.org/event/gday-usa-experience-australia-sxsw-2018>

<sup>440</sup> Matt W. Hayward, Paul J. de Tores, and Peter B. Banks. "Habitat Use of the Quokka, *Setonix Brachyurus* (Macropodidae: Marsupialia), in the Northern Jarrah Forest of Australia," *Journal of Mammalogy* 86, no. 4 (2005): 683-687.

<sup>441</sup> G'Day Australia House @ SXSW, "Event Description."

transnational outreach, an inconspicuous quokka affirms the vast habitat and rhizomorphic biodiversity of the world, through its mere presence. Similarly, it is the owners of the accessorized canine, who eventually co-opt its sweet charm to receive compliments and attention from other visitors. Yet, it is the disruptive presence of sentience in unexpected spaces, which pronounces the other-oriented direction of joy, the simple capacity to suspend an affectively alienated self, in order to feel with and for others, in this case through the picture of a quokka or with the canine. When habitual modes of interacting with a space feel jaded and outmoded, it often helps to observe the bodily habits of those consumers, who disrupt spatial orientations, just in the immediate way they inhabit that space. In the context of field note 5, I am referring to the children enjoying food and making a sport out of mundane activities such as pointing to the trucks and spelling out the food dishes. Deleuze and Guattari write something similar on children's relation with animals, in that children "make a list of affects," which is why their activity is affective, and not representative.<sup>442</sup> By extension, in my observation, the children in the food truck space were connected to their bodies, making a modifiable map with the most immediate world they were occupying. Again, I am aware of a general tendency to fetishize the innocence of kids or assume that they are not susceptible to fragmented attention spans, given the technologically hyper-connected food space which is any and every space of consumption. Yet, in this particular experience, observing the childlike (literal) playfulness and spatio-temporal absorption of these young consumers re-ignited my embodied ethic of rerouting bodily attention in the face of a habitual dead-end. With the field threatening me with affective eviction, the non-human and non-adult life-affirming rhythms helped offset that threat. They helped me re-embody the space, by way of aesthetic and affective

---

<sup>442</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 257-258.

remediation. If the life-affirming rhythms of the SB food trailer park at SXSW help us understand the aesthetical and affective emplacement of consumption and production in a fast pace culinary context, they also shed light on the different kinds of identities and dietary audiences, which such spaces constitute. In the following section, I consider the aesthetic and affective patterns of experiences I perceive in the SB audience, of course as a temporally, spatially, materially, and culturally co-participating/co-producing audiencing rhetorical critic.<sup>443</sup>

## AUDIENCE

**Field note 1.** Bodhi Viet Vegan is the only food truck with an expressly stated mission: “Peace begins on your plate. Our goal is to spread this message through tasty, home-made meat free and meat-alternative Vietnamese cuisine.”<sup>444</sup> Vegan food: key to a peaceful and healthy lifestyle. The food truck makes clear associations of everyday affects and emotions with the food, one consumes. The message is pertinent to Austin’s vegan diet friendliness. This food truck is run by local Buddhist nuns. Their message conveys a health-focused mission, over profit margin. The business clearly marks off a territory in a super competitive food truck business. I also noticed relatively smaller social media handles on the truck’s body compared to other trucks. It seems less focused on media frenzied action.

The food spaces at SouthBites® food trailer park showcased an eclectic diversity of food options, geared toward just the kind of consumers, who have an enthusiastic flair for global food. In other words, my experiences in the field matched with the existing research on the North American gourmet food truck culture. And, to be completely honest, the reflection reeks of sensory jadedness, because there is nothing new for me to contribute to the research. However, as I had mentioned in my observations, related to the vegan food truck cluster in the first live action cluster (apropos of Austin), SB also paid attention to this dietary preference, identity, and practice through one of its food trucks called Bodhi Viet Vegan, meat-free, and meat-alternative Vietnamese

---

<sup>443</sup> Haliliuc, “Being,” 134.

<sup>444</sup> “About Us,” Bodhi Viet Vegan, accessed April 4, 2018, <http://www.bodhivietveggies.com/index.html>



cuisine. Bodhi was the only food truck of its culinary kind, in a large array of food truck businesses at the trailer park. Nonetheless, it stood out to me in its rhetorical appeal to SXSW audiences through a fascinating combination of a vegan diet, and its long-lasting aesthetic and affective presence in the body, through the healthy experience of peace.

Instead of taking an overtly moralistic, ethical, or confrontational stance in the support of animal rights, Bodhi correlates simple habits of cultivating peace and wellness through everyday dietary practices of Vietnamese vegan food. The food truck business has a very simple website, with a very brief description about their culinary motivations. However, I understand their focus on peace, through their culinary practice of engaged Buddhism. Generally, major Buddhist traditions encourage the practice of non-violence toward all living or sentient beings, which is related to biosocial feelings of peacefulness and serenity (and vice-versa).<sup>445</sup> Bodhi seems to embody the production of non-violent peacefulness on a plate. From a Deweyan sense, Bodhi encourages a practice of mindful consumption through the mode of veganism, resulting in the delightful perception of peace, as an aesthetic experience. With an appeal to embodied peace through the medium of the food on the plate, Bodhi's approach tends to re-claim vegan consumers' affective constructions of awkwardness, just as well.<sup>446</sup> Instead, Bodhi represents those peaceful "vegan killjoys," who engender anxiety in the "dominant affective community" of carnivores, with their non-normative and ironic production of peace on plate.<sup>447</sup>

As "vegan killjoys," the owners of the truck refuse culinary affiliations with the dominant affective order, challenge normative notions of joy or happiness associated with food in Austin

---

<sup>445</sup> Kenneth Kraft, *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>446</sup> Twine, "Vegan Killjoys," 631.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 628.

proper, not through open contestation, but an open and peaceful “world-making” through food.<sup>448</sup> If a peaceful vegan diet helps one embody calmness, joy, and serenity, the affective distance it creates from cultural vegan stereotypes, diffuses the tense everyday rhetoric of awkward veganism. The food truck’s presence queers the SB food trailer park and the everyday rhetoric pertaining to culinary practices, identities, and spaces in specific ways. First of all, consistent with the dietary perceptions of vegan food, the truck challenges the meat-focused normativity of the trailer parker. Second, since local Buddhist nuns run this little business, the food truck does re-claim a culinary presence in a racially fraught space, because of US vegan culture’s “multicultural insensitivity,” and exclusive attention to white middle-class consumers.<sup>449</sup> Vegan consumers can get a glimpse of meat-free and meat-alternative cuisines from the Vietnamese culture, which draws attention to a racial diversity of ecosystems practicing veganism. The only problem is that this food truck business occupies such a miniscule food space in Austin’s vegan culture, that it runs the risk of fetishization and racially-appropriative consumption, within the racial majority of vegan consumers. Yet it was refreshing to observe visitors’ appreciation for the food truck business. The food truck’s presence also affirms Austin city’s ethical attempt at diversifying vegan culture within its consumer circle. In each element of rhetorical fieldwork, whether it be the SXSW texts, contexts, and audiences, I have utilized a somatic orientation to underscore the aesthetic and affective registers of my research on the quotidian rhetoric of Austin’s culinary cultures. The following section, similar to the first live action cluster, discusses the thrill of listening to the body as an evaluative measure of navigation by happenstances, along with the inevitable sensory dead

---

<sup>448</sup> Twine, “Vegan Killjoys,” 624.

<sup>449</sup> Griffin, *Understanding Veganism*, 10; Harper, “Going,” 156; Corey Lee Wrenn, “Trump Veganism: A Political Survey of American Vegans in the Era of Identity Politics,” *Societies*, 7 (2017): 1.

ends, one hits in bodily engagements with chaotic food spaces.

## JUDGMENT

**Field note 1.** It is Tuesday evening. I end up navigating to my field through a serendipitous refrain for the day: be creative shameless. I attributed the refrain to a couple of tucks, which had the words “be creative” and “shameless” inscribed on them. I know that context of the messages was different, but it helped me produce my own refrain for embodied research on that evening: be creative shameless. Following the trucks provided a detour for me. I wasn’t planning on following them. But I wanted to capture the refrains in concert. Owing to this improvisational refrain, I rerouted to the SB trailer.

**Field note 2.** Similar to my experiences at Rainey Street, I seem to have lost appetite again in confronting the swathe of animation at SXSW. The smell of shrimp and fries titillated my nostrils for a sublime second, awakening a desire to nourish my body through fresh food truck food. However, seeing the long lines already formed outside the food trucks takes away from food consumption means to me: primarily a relaxing experience to mitigate everyday anxiety. If the pursuit of food is too competitive, I find it easier to let go than to get all worked up. As an ordinary body in relation with a multitude of life-affirming rhythms of space, place, and other bodies, one tends to learn about themselves too.

Earlier in this chapter, I discuss how my embodied attitude and orientation to fieldwork entails a practice of becoming a detour de force in navigating the field. In doing so, the researcher can enter the field through multiple entryways, apropos of a rhizome’s growth in the earth. I am not negating the comforting role of habit, on whose account one might definitely begin again from the same space of entry. However, an openness to these multiple entryways or detours in the heavily barricaded SXSW context is perhaps as close as I could get to practicing an abstract idea. Moreover, owing to my feet-first ethic of field navigation, my embodied politics courts a freedom of mobility, whimsicality, and guided misdirection toward challenging the sovereignty of human cognition, in assessing the biosocial pace of experiences within a food truck culture. My approach is a slight variation from how McKinnon et al. remodel rhetorical judgment in effecting a balance

of power between a critic's agency and the field itself.<sup>450</sup> Yet, my body's (feet in particular) closer affiliation with a horizontal and immanent field of experience, than with a supposedly sovereign vertical head space, practices this said balance of power. At the same time, as my analysis reveals, the countervailing force of the field on my body, demands an acknowledgement of the anti-aesthetic labor required in fieldwork, thereby counter-balancing my critical agency.

Connected to my embodied ethic and balance of power is the rhizomatic notion of the refrain, which Deleuze and Guattari articulate in several places in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Out of their multiplicitous readings of the refrain, I extract the parts which mirror the context of my research. In my understanding, the refrain is the affective aspect of a musical structure, one which music itself has not captured and transformed into a symbolic "form of expression," yet.<sup>451</sup> This is why Deleuze and Guattari note that "the refrain is rather a means of preventing music, warding it off, or forgoing it."<sup>452</sup> Yet, the affective resistance of the refrain is what makes music possible through the assimilation of the refrain in a symbolic structure, which imparts an emotional signature to the music.

In the context of my research, my embodied judgment to open up to the possibility of reaching my field, through two randomly occurring, yet intuitively related phrases, makes 'be creative shameless' a navigational refrain, a repetitive rhythm of becoming a detour de force. This navigational refrain helps mark a new territory of misdirection through which to arrive at the field. The field, the SB food trailer park is its own symbolic structure, was inundated with the food trucks in a productive and consumptive melee of human, non-human, and extra-human encounters, and

---

<sup>450</sup> McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 15-16.

<sup>451</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 300.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

was replete with several biosocial paces of lived experience. The navigational refrain short-circuits the symbolic structure or forgoes the adventure of symbolic meaning making (following GPS for instance) by temporarily helping my body take off in an uncharted and affectively saturated territory. Furthermore, “the refrain is prism, a crystal of space-time. It acts upon that which surrounds it, sound or light, extracting from it various vibrations, or decompositions, projections, or transformations.”<sup>453</sup> My navigational refrain “be creative shameless,” acted exactly like a crystal of space-time, in that it acted upon the person (me) who perceived it in the first place, along with the spatial and temporal contours of Downtown Austin’s vehicular and foot-traffic.

The refrain extracted my feet-first on detour sensibility and transformed into a shamelessly creative map, whose agency I had already projected to two random but consecutively moving phrases. In this nomadic navigation to the field, the refrain actually demonstrated what Deleuze and Guattari consider “a catalytic function,” because the bodily thrill and anxiety of trusting a playful refrain, sped up my perceptual experience of time and space apropos of an unexpected encounter with an impromptu machinic assembly.<sup>454</sup> Moreover, the refrain as a prismatic interface enabled the “indirect interactions between elements devoid of so-called natural affinity...”<sup>455</sup> In the context, those unaffiliated interactions would be my shamelessly creative feet-on-detour, a new detour toward the SB trailer park, the vibrations and rhythms of a chaotic Downtown Austin milieu, and the vehicles carrying the navigational refrain. However, once I reached the SB food trailer park, the rhetoricity of the field’s symbolic structure, i.e. its overpowering capacity to overwhelm my body with an acute loss of appetite would assimilate and deterritorialize the

---

<sup>453</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 348.

<sup>454</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 348.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

navigational refrain. The resulting life-affirming form of expression and emotional signature of SB food trailer park would be called anxiety. As my research experiences within the SXSW context indicate, embodied modes of rhetorical judgment implicate a strange interplay of agency and bodily surrender. Embodied judgment suggests an ethical return to representational re-invention and crises of representation in rhetorical scholarship.

## **ETHICS**

The limits of my embodied participation in particular spaces in the field, whether in the context of regular food truck spaces or SXSW, affectively alienated me from the experience. To add insult to injury, my bodily estrangement only demanded further anti-aesthetic labor of bodily immersion in spaces, against which my body was revolting quite vehemently. Such embodied paradoxes place me in the crosshairs of an ethical dilemma. How do I co-participate in and help co-produce the quotidian rhetoric related to Austin's food truck culture, when my body insists on a full-body exodus from these spaces? Is bodily resistance to certain stimuli, another way to think through representational re-invention? These are some of the questions that haunted and motivated me throughout my embodied research during regular food truck visits and the SXSW context. Both of my live action clusters in Austin, Texas enunciate the negative affects of anxiety and distress, associated with my fieldwork. There were many little moments of aesthetically delightful perception interspersed with lighter affects, during my time in the field. But, what really creates a crisis of representation (apropos of Dunn's work at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch) is the differential intensity of everyday rhetoric, which I embodied in a very different way through fieldwork, as opposed to a rhetorical analysis of a culinary-themed media artifact in chapter four.

As I have recounted earlier, I met the physical and psychological limits of body during

fieldwork, particularly pronounced through a severe loss of appetite within the food truck spaces. On the other hand, in chapter four, despite my para-social co-participation in the anxiolytic experiences of the food truck competition in *The Great Food Truck Race*, the process of my analysis was fairly smooth. The strongest indicator of a smooth analytical process was my voracious appetite, not just toward the consumption of the show, but also toward visceral food. Each section of the analysis coupled with the show's portrayal of food production and consumption left me inordinately hungry. Since, every encounter on the show, despite the reality flag, happened in a controlled environment, I did not register the intensity of a negative affect, quite like the way I did in the field. My experiences in the field do not negate the ones during the media artifact analysis. Cumulatively, they point to a representational crisis in the everyday rhetoric surrounding food truck cultures, especially if fieldwork does not supplement a rhetorical analysis of the media representation. Without my enervating experiences in and around Austin's food truck spaces, my ethical commitment toward developing an aesthetic and affective account of the body in ordinary spaces of production and consumption would be incomplete. Whereas the ethical implications of my fieldwork within the SXSW food truck problematize the body's sovereignty in rhetorical scholarship, they also offer an interesting pivot toward my rhetorical analysis of a media artifact *The Great Food Truck Race* in the upcoming chapter four. This chapter pronounces the marked difference between the aesthetic and affective dimensions of culinary-focused quotidian rhetoric in the field, through a dedicated analysis of a media representation.

## Chapter 4: Application of Quotidian rhetoric: Food Truck Culture in the Media

The rationale of chapter four is similar to Dunn's embodied field experiences in the Moonlite Bunny Ranch after she conducted a rhetorical analysis of the media artifact *Cathouse*, based on the brothel itself.<sup>456</sup> In supplementing textual criticism with field-based observations, Dunn was able to amplify the voices in her critical intervention about media representations, production contexts, and audiences in cultural studies.<sup>457</sup> I am inspired to execute similar rhetorical moves but perhaps move with a rhythmic touch of simultaneity in my criticism of the food truck culture in Austin, Texas. By simultaneity, I mean that I witness my gustatory field, collect field notes, and reflect on them while examining media representations of the food truck culture particularly based out of North American cities. My strategy of rhythmic simultaneity, performs the impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect from chapter three, as it keeps me suspended between the dance of stuckness and mobility in text and field, all open to contradictions, failures, anger, love, and so much more to echo Pezzullo once more. With the media representations, all the information I have is pre-packaged and waiting for my eager hands to unwrap. The situation in the field is not going to provide a streamlined access to gustatory everyday rhetoric. To channel Landau once again with feeling, the impasse keeps me accountable to my stuckness, and reflexive to my mobility, as a feeling rhetorical critic.

With the help of existing research on the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political scope of the food truck culture in North America, I now move on to exploring a media representation of this culture. My goal with the rhetorical field-methods based analyses is to

---

<sup>456</sup> Dunn, "Going."

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.



evaluate if the extant critiques of the US food truck culture, map on to the media representation and vice versa. Furthermore, a media representation of the food trucks is an interesting rhetorical touchstone for the participant observation, I conduct within and around the food truck landscape of Austin, Texas, as part of my field work in chapter three. For the purposes of chapter four, I focus on one media representation of food trucks in the US, *The Food Network's The Great Food Truck Race: The Family Face-Off*.

My choice of artifact is driven by the fact that *The Great Food Truck Race* is the longest running television reality show of its kind (eight years in running since its inaugural season in 2010).<sup>458</sup> The show also coincides most closely with the emergence of the gourmet food truck market in North America between 2007-2009 in wake of a global economic slump, which precipitated the food industry's format shift to mobile food businesses.<sup>459</sup> Owing to its age and experience of the US gourmet food truck culture, *The Great Food Truck Race* is the closest media representation of the fieldwork, I conducted within the quotidian food truck landscape of Austin, Texas. As part of my analysis, I focus on the most current season of the show to offer rhetorical insights, on the life-affirming rhythms of everyday production and consumption including their racial, sexual/gendered, spatial, and class-based distribution across in that season. I buttress my focused analysis, with comparative references to the remaining seasons, not necessarily examining each of their episodes in detail, akin to season eight. But, my goal is to find similar and divergent themes across the seasons. In terms of the show's timeline, I do pay sharper attention to the inaugural season of the show, since it corresponds with the rising eminence the North American

---

<sup>458</sup> "About the Host," *The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off*, accessed February 16, 2018, <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race>

<sup>459</sup> David Weber, *The Food Truck Handbook: Start, Grow, and Succeed in The Mobile Food Business* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012), 2-4.

food truck culture, and offers a different (less established, more provisional, less diversified) look into a nascent market context. Akin to my methodology in chapter three, I follow McKinnon et al.'s five-fold methodology in rhetorical field methods, based on which I first identify the text, context, audience, judgment, and ethics of my media artifact. I keep in mind the miscibility of these five methodological rubrics, knowing that one affects and is affected by the other. Within each field-based element, I find connections, contradictions, failures, and impasses with my work on quotidian rhetoric to highlight the interplay of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. Furthermore, based on my introductory discussion on the aesthetic and affective (rhizomatic) dimensions of habits, I also analyze the sort of habits that groups in my media artifact, embody in relation with their living, non-living, and technological ecologies.

## **RHETORICAL ANALYSIS: THE GREAT FOOD TRUCK RACE: THE FAMILY FACE-OFF TEXT**

The Food Network show, *The Great Food Truck Race: The Family Face-Off*, invites a rhetorical analysis to explore what rhetorical field scholars explore as everyday, playful, grassroots, and pulsing texts in the field. According to the show's parent website (The Food Network), the show features an interesting mix of family and friends who compete with each other across six "gourmet food truck" teams for the "\$50,000 grand prize."<sup>460</sup> Chef Tyler Florence, who has about fifteen years of experience in the culinary field, hosts the show.<sup>461</sup> The teams are food

---

<sup>460</sup> "About the Show," The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off, accessed February 16, 2018, <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race>; "News," The Great Food Truck Race, accessed February 20, 2018, <http://www.tvguide.com/tvshows/the-great-food-truck-race/news/327359/>

<sup>461</sup> "About the Host," The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off, accessed February 16, 2018, <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race>.

truck novices which travel on their mobile vehicles and offer exciting culinary delights to customers as they drive alongside several regions in North America such as coastal California, Route 66, East coast, and Southern states among others.<sup>462</sup> As Florence puts it in the first season, the show promises “the first ever clash of the food trucks, the ultimate culinary food truck road trip, with 4000 miles to go, and \$50, 000 on the line.”<sup>463</sup> The prize money for the show has remained at \$50,000 since its inaugural year and is referred to in the subsequent seasons with a similar phrasing. Season eight mentions their small business sponsor “Farmers Insurance” in each episode.<sup>464</sup>

So far, the show has featured eight seasons, each comprising six or seven episodes, except for season seven (first season to feature families exclusively) which the website splits into seasons 7.0 and 7.1, with the former featuring just one episode and the latter including five episodes.<sup>465</sup> The competitive format is fairly simple: the winning team proceeds to the consequent episode, while the losing team drives away until the single team to last the length of the competition wins

---

<sup>462</sup> “The Great Food Truck Race Episodes,” The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off, accessed February 16, 2018, <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race/episodes/>

<sup>463</sup> “The Great Food Truck Race S01E02,” The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeLpnzHIDKE>; The first season of the show is not available officially on its parent site, along with other legal avenues such as iTunes, or online streaming services, such as Amazon, Hulu, Netflix etc. Since, the inaugural season is crucial to my analysis, I am forced to refer to an unofficial youtube upload of the show’s first season. But, my research goal is educational, as opposed to illegal distribution of copyright material.

<sup>464</sup> Florence, “The Big,” season 8, episode 1; Tyler Florence, “New Marching Orders,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 2, The Food Network, (New York: August 20, 2017), iTunes; Tyler Florence, “Sweet Home Alabama,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 3, The Food Network, (New York: August 20, 2017), iTunes; Tyler Florence, “Hot Chicken in the City,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 4, The Food Network, (New York: August 20, 2017), iTunes; Tyler Florence, “Fresh Off the Farm,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 5, The Food Network, (New York: August 20, 2017), iTunes; Tyler Florence, “The Race through Savannah,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 6, The Food Network, (New York: August 20, 2017), iTunes.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid; “Family Face-Off: A Family Affair,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 1, Hulu, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193122>; “The Great Food Truck Race Episodes,” The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race/episodes/700-series>

the prize money.<sup>466</sup> All seasons feature similar themes, which include suspenseful twists, turns, and pitfalls, immunity opportunities from elimination, Florence's ominous elimination black book, and dramatized musical accompaniments.<sup>467</sup> As part of their challenges, the teams sometimes create specials related to the city and the visiting guest of the episode, along with their own stylized menus. The most current season (eight), aired in the year 2017. It features the theme "Battle for the South," and showcases teams competing on their food trucks in Southern US cities such as New Orleans, LA, "Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida," Tuscaloosa, AL, Nashville, TN, Athens, GA, and Savannah, GA.<sup>468</sup> Season eight has an eclectic mix of teams in competition from different US cities, such as friends and "classically trained chefs," "Nick Hunter, Steven Klatt, and Brandon Lapp ("Braised in the South")" from Charleston, SC, "19-year old," Mikey Robins and his friends Taylor and Ashanti ("The Breakfast Club") from Philadelphia, friends and business partners Cedric McCoy, Ryan Thompson, and Esther Torres from Dallas ("Mr. Po' Boys").<sup>469</sup> Other teams include Luis Lara Polano, "his daughter Carleena Lara-Bregatta, and niece Sarah Hasbun," from Cherry Hill, NJ ("Papi Chulo's Empanadas"), Donnie Ferneau along with his wife Meghan and "sous chef Amanda Ivy" ("The Southern Frenchie"), from Little Rock, AR, Shona House and "her sons Justin and Landon," ("Stick 'Em Up"), from Rogersville, TN.<sup>470</sup> Finally team six feature friends "Bill Henrique, Ryan Schuhmacher and Dan Torres" ("Wicked Good Seafood")

---

<sup>466</sup> The Great Food Truck Race, "About the Show,"; Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>467</sup> "The Great Food Truck Race S01E01," The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 3, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_InJ1Bq2Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_InJ1Bq2Rw); "The Great Food Truck Race S01E01," The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeLpnzHIDKE>; Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>468</sup> The Great Food Truck Race, "About the Show," <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race/episodes/800>

<sup>469</sup> "Meet the Food Truck Teams from Season 8," The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off, accessed February 16, 2018, <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race/photos/meet-the-food-truck-teams-from-season-8>

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

from Falmouth, MA.<sup>471</sup>

## CONTEXT

In the introductory episode (“The Big ‘Not So Easy’”) of season eight, which kicks off in New Orleans, the host, Tyler Florence heralds, what I argue is an *adventurously urgent* context for the show. The context further pronounces the affective labor of the competition:

They [the teams] have got the culinary chops, heart, and passion to take over their very own food truck. Each week they’ll *roll* into a new city, face unimaginable challenges. And all kinds of breakdowns. In just two days, they’ll have to prep, cook, and sell as much as they possibly can....So, let’s find out who can stand the Southern heat and who’s going to get the boot...Battle for the South, y’all. Let’s get rolling.<sup>472</sup>

Florence’s monologue introduces a dynamic vector of mobility (consider the word *roll* or *seesaw* for instance), which when peppered with visual-sonic choral vignettes from the show’s participants, accents their bodily immersion in intense preparatory modes: “Hey, come get some food from us! along with their...[screams]...I am trying to stay happy and positive but this sucks [bleep]...We’ve got so many orders, we’re getting our ass kicked...I do not want to go home.”<sup>473</sup> “Let’s get rolling!” is Florence’s habitual refrain in the show to cheer competitors on, to move them to their upcoming challenge, further heightening the adventurously urgent/mobile context of the show. Interesting, “Let’s Get Rolling!” is also the very first episode of season one, which makes mobility and adventure, a consistent theme, for which the show strives in each season, aired so far.<sup>474</sup> The participants can be witnessed, responding to Florence’s call to adventure, through competitive frames of reference such as “game time,” “game plan,” “game of seconds,” or

---

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> Florence, “The Big,” season 8, episode 1.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid; Florence, “Sweet Home,” season 8, episode 3.

<sup>474</sup> “The Great Food Truck Race Episodes,” The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off, accessed March 2, 2018, <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race/episodes/100-series>

“anybody’s game.”<sup>475</sup>

Florence’s energetic emphasis on mobility and its relatively easy access to participants especially, re-invokes Lemon’s work on gourmet food trucks’ larger mobility radius as opposed to traditional food (taco) trucks.<sup>476</sup> The mobility practices of the gourmet food trucks of season eight gives us subtle hints related to the class-based distribution of the truckers’ culinary offerings. If season eight, by virtue of having been around for over seven years, does not belabor the target market for show, season one, on the other hand, marks and markets itself pretty explicitly in the first episode of season one. Florence’s introductory monologue in the first season clearly situates the show:

Let’s get one thing straight from the top. This isn’t a show about taco trucks, roach coaches, or even loncheras. We’re talking about something completely different: gourmet food trucks. All across America, amazing chefs are taking to the streets in mobile kitchens. They are parking on corners and in front of office buildings and serving some of the most unique, most delicious, and most revolutionary dishes, you’ve ever seen.<sup>477</sup>

Florence’s comments are commensurate with extant research’s claims about the race, class, gender, and spatial politics of the food truck culture in the North American context. For example, their usage of social media catchphrases such as “#HERETOSTAY” or “#THEBREAKFASTCLUB,” taking ‘selfies’ with customers, post-challenge selfies with other teams, or even posting live updates of their next location on social media, speaks to their enterprising utilization of technology, which the research on the current gourmet food truck context supports.<sup>478</sup> There is a definitely a lot more references to social media sites such as

---

<sup>475</sup> Florence, “The Race,” season 8, episode 6; Florence, “Fresh Off,” season 8, episode 5.

<sup>476</sup> Lemon, “The Spatial,” 174.

<sup>477</sup> “The Great Food Truck Race S01E01,” The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 2, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_InJ1Bq2Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_InJ1Bq2Rw)

<sup>478</sup> Florence, “The Big,” season 8, episode 1; Florence, “New Marching,” season 8, episode 2; Florence, “Sweet Home,” season 8, episode 3; Florence, “Hot Chicken,” season 8, episode 4.

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter in the more recent seasons, as opposed to barely any in the inaugural season.<sup>479</sup>

The food trucks have robust infrastructure and are equipped with cutting-edge culinary technology. While a couple of trucks experience technology glitches such as propane shortage and generator failures in the first season, the show's eight iteration is comparative smoother, with no such experiences for the teams and the audiences (e.g., there is only a minor instance in the team challenge in E2, S8, when The Breakfast Club's burner would not light up).<sup>480</sup> Overall, the trucks featured in all the seasons are quirkily stylized, which presents a hip, cool, colorful, creative, and gentrified image to the residents of the cities, the trucks visit en route to the competition. Similarly, in the final episode of season eight ("The Race through Savannah"), the final two teams on the competition (Braised in the South and Mr. Po' Boys), are required to sell their food to Savannah's residents, on local pedicabs ("the little bikes...with people in the back").<sup>481</sup> It is understandable, that the show's creators might have sought prior legal permission from local authorities, for the use of pedicabs. However, the city's transport infrastructure is so welcoming of the gourmet food trucks that it highlights some of the spatial injustices, which traditional taco trucks have to face inevitably.

The kick-off city of New Orleans in season eight, on the other hand, provides a kairotic local/contextual knowledge (apropos of Hess) to the delicacies of the first challenge, case in point

---

<sup>479</sup> Ibid; "Family Face-Off: A Family Affair," *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 1, Hulu, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193122>

<sup>480</sup> "The Great Food Truck Race S01E01," *The Great Food Truck Race*, accessed March 3, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_InJ1Bq2Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_InJ1Bq2Rw); "The Great Food Truck Race S01E04," *The Great Food Truck Race*, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vezVyDXV2Fs>; Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

<sup>481</sup> Florence, "The Race," season 8, episode 6.

beignets, which are a local favorite: “All right teams, New Orleans is famous for a lot of things, but they are really famous for their beignets. Delicious fried dough.”<sup>482</sup> Or if we were to retrace steps to E4, S1 (“The Big Uneasy,”) where the teams compete in New Orleans, one team suggests a shrimp focused menu, because of its popularity in the local context: something that may titillate “New Orleans taste.”<sup>483</sup> Therefore, owing to its own contextual (culinary, socio-cultural, historical) specificity, the city of New Orleans embodies its own “rhetoricity,” its rhetorical power, both material and immaterial, through which to co-compete in the teams’ beignet challenge.<sup>484</sup> Based on another illustration, the rhetoricity of the city is particularly pronounced in E5, S8 (“Fresh Off the Farm”), when the teams are competing in Athens, Georgia. Florence reminds them of the city’s parking regulations, which do not allow food trucks, any kind of street parking, because of which, the food trucks are required to pair up with local businesses to serve food in their parking lots.<sup>485</sup> Owing to their rhetoricity, the cities act with, and against the culinary practices of the competitors. The dough-like texture of the city limns the food truck competition with its mnemonic tastes. Besides the overall tone of the show and the mobility practices of the food trucks in different cityscapes, the audience (self-included) experiences the life-affirming rhythms of food production and consumption via the food truckers.

**Life-affirming rhythms on *The Great Food Truck Race*.** The life-affirming rhythms of *The Great Food Truck Race*, add to the embodied, emplaced, and viscerally thrilling context of the show: “raw emotion” as Florence puts it in E5, S8.<sup>486</sup> All the seasons of the show, offer dramatized

---

<sup>482</sup> Florence, “The Big,” season 8, episode 1.

<sup>483</sup> “The Great Food Truck Race S01E04,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vezVyDXV2Fs>

<sup>484</sup> Senda-Cook et al., “Interrogating,” 37.

<sup>485</sup> Florence, “Fresh Off,” season 8, episode 5.

<sup>486</sup> Florence, “Fresh Off,” season 8, episode 5.



iterations of the family or friend drama recipe, which adds to the life-affirming rhythms of the show. As I have stated before, by life-affirming rhythms, I mean the social-biological pace of everyday experience, or in the Jamesian sense, the cubic capacity of being sensibly alive. These rhythms are the sensate refrains of living, insofar as they do not discharge themselves into fatality. On the show, competitors embody life-affirming rhythms as different forms of emotions and affects, palpable in their bodily gestures, silences, tones, irritations, animations, postures, and interactions with each other and their environments. For example, in the first episode of season eight (E(n), S(n) from henceforth), Meaghan from The Southern Frenchie sounds both thrilled and scared, at the overwhelmingly fast prospect of buying ingredients, on a very large-scale: “Oh my gosh, guys. My heart is pounding. I don’t think I have ever shopped this fast before.”<sup>487</sup> Remarks like Meaghan’s, point to the overarching affective patterns of experience in the show. I focus on two predominant ones involving anxiety and joy.

**Anxiety.** In the context of the *Great Food Truck Race*, the form of anxiety can be felt in different stressful situations that the competitors have to face, including the limited time frame of cooking, making snap judgments on the amount of produce to be purchased, selling the prepared food/selling out everything while customers are still lining up, or the very prospect of elimination from the show. In all these examples, anxiety does not interrupt the movement of the tasks in anyway; it just makes them more difficult because the competitors have no way to estimate how hard or facile the task will be. Anxiety’s imminence, on the other hand, is felt sharply in each task as “a something that is nothing.”<sup>488</sup> As I have noted in chapter three, anxiety’s pattern of experience builds up as a process of churning, one which exacerbates the feeling of the nothingness to come

---

<sup>487</sup> Florence, “The Big,” season 8, episode 1.

<sup>488</sup> Brinkema, “*The Forms*,” 187.

in the show's plot.<sup>489</sup>

Anxiety restricts bodily comportments, such as the shallow breath of labored breathing, which repeatedly undoes a sense of calm or relaxation through a perceived time squeeze, such as the anticipation of reaching out for a "life-jacket," as Ryan reflects in E4, S8 ("Hot Chicken in the City").<sup>490</sup> For example, in the final episode E6, S8, anxiety reaches the tipping point of difficult movement. Nick from Braised in the South aptly describes the deciding moment, as the feeling of experiencing "the weight of the world [having] come down on their shoulders," because only one team walks away with the grand prize of \$50, 000.<sup>491</sup> Such examples, explain the spatially unmoored form of this irate affect: "anxiety: that one will never find ground."<sup>492</sup>

For example, Nick from Braised in the South remarks on the atmospheric tendencies in which anxiety works in E2, S8: "So, we're headed into elimination, and anxiety is all over the place."<sup>493</sup> Anxiety is the teams' visceral reactions to the prickly humiliating moment, when Florence brings out his "black book" to announce the final tallies of the day, based on which eliminations are decided. Esther from Mr. Po' Boys communicates an impending sense of doom quite aptly, when she finds her team, as one of the bottom two teams along with Stick 'em Up in E3, S8 ("Sweet Home Alabama"), facing Florence's black book: "I am going to pass out. This is nerve-racking. My stomach is in knots. I am nervous."<sup>494</sup> Her comments speak to the anxiolytic time squeeze, which participants can register in their difficult breathing, and other choppy bodily affects, but in anticipation of an overwhelmingly capacious sense of embarrassment. In moments

---

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4.

<sup>491</sup> Florence, "The Race," season 8, episode 6.

<sup>492</sup> Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4; Brinkema, "*The Forms*," 185.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Florence, "Sweet Home," season 8, episode 3.

of facing Florence's black book, teams are also seen referring to "flashbacks," from previous episodes or feeling like they have "a big pit" in their stomachs when some find themselves on the cusp of elimination.<sup>495</sup> As an ongoing pattern of visceral experience, anxiety announces itself in the form of awkwardness or embarrassment, when the competitors learn about their kickoff challenge in E2, S8 ("New Marching Orders"): the collaborative effort of two teams to "create cohesive dishes" for 50 people, at the "Naval Air Station of Pensacola."<sup>496</sup> Esther from Mr. Po' Boys is not too thrilled about the upcoming collaboration: "I can't believe Tyler is going to make us work with another food truck. This is a little awkward. I don't know if we have any friends on this competition."<sup>497</sup> Esther's remarks about awkwardness convey her anxious unease about inhabiting the unknown.

In the show's temporal and spatial contexts, both Florence and the show demand difficult humiliating movements from the teams. Without the titillating promise of such struggle-filled responses from the teams, the show will lose its adventurously urgent tone, its embodied, and emplaced potency, and the capacity to fulfill a team's dreams of owning their very own food truck. Similarly, in each episode, Florence informs the team about an impromptu challenge which they have to undergo under some kind of temporal constraint and spatial groundlessness. As the host of a thrilling and dramatic show, Florence is an anxiolytic embodiment par excellence. He represents the perceptual oversupply of a time-squeeze. He does not interrupt the teams' perception of the competitive time-frame, he just makes time and space related movements seem more labor-intensive. Examples can include the pecan challenge in E3, S8, in which teams need to carry as

---

<sup>495</sup> Ibid; Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4.

<sup>496</sup> Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

<sup>497</sup> Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

many pecans possible in their arms to their individual stations. In Florence's own words, "And I'm about to wipe that smile right off your face 'cause it's not going to be that easy. You are gonna have to shell your own pecans with those hammers in front of you, as many as you can in 15 minutes."<sup>498</sup> Anxiety is palpable in this challenge, as the participants maneuver in different labored attempts to first carry the pecans, and then shell them in such a short amount of time. Furthermore, the space is charged with several labored movements, which expand the space's anxiolytic attributes, to choke the participants with an erratic excess. His repetitions are not exactly helpless, because the show's structure facilitates them. Yet, Florence's repetitions are painful for his audience and include communicating team challenges via phone/in person, or politely requesting the losing team to cede their food truck keys. His presence marks a pattern of uncomfortable pleasure, which spells humiliating difficult movements for all the teams. The teams, on the other hand, respond to the, with helpless embodied orientations, feelings, affects, gestures, and conversations through which they go about the different tasks. Having drawn attention to the aesthetic and affective patterns of experience related to anxiety, I now discuss the second predominant pattern of experience in the show: joy.

**Joy.** When Shona from Stick 'em Up hands over her keys in E3, S8, there is a lingering sense of defeat in her bodily posture, a downcast expression, but also the joy of having experienced the contest with her sons. She reflects: "Wow. My heart just went, "Whoo.""<sup>499</sup> Shona's tonal inflection for the word 'whoo' has a plummeting direction, something that her hand gestures, corroborate. Whoo is a strange choice for expressing a sense of loss because the same word with an outgoing or laterally excited inflection can connote victory (which can also be heard when other

---

<sup>498</sup> Florence, "Sweet Home," season 8, episode 3.

<sup>499</sup> Florence, "Sweet Home, season 8, episode 3.

teams cheer on Stick ‘em Up, as they walk away from the competition). In Shona’s context, whooh sounds like an intertwined feeling of sadness and joy. In the show’s context, formal joy feels palpable in the food truck environment, when the food truckers are able to accomplish a task in time, or produce a brilliant moment of taste, borne out of collective effort. However, this joyful feeling is predicated on the teams’ consistent desire to will the anxiolytic qualities of the competition on their bodies, as perhaps the only way to stay in the competition, until the very end.

In fact, the complexity of joy is sharply pronounced in the second last episode of season eight, where there are only three teams left in the competition. Florence wants to ascertain if the teams still embody the same gusto, or in his words if they still have “the fire,” with which they started their food truck journey.<sup>500</sup> So he shows up announced at each team’s food truck (Mr. Po’ Boys, Braised in the South, and The Breakfast Club) and asks them about their strategies toward the final push, including what this competition means for each of them. Interestingly, one of Florence’s interchanges with Mikey from the Breakfast Club captures the shaded multiplicity of joy better than its simplistic representations. Before the interaction, Florence explains why he wants to check in with Mikey: “When it gets down to three teams, there is so much raw emotion, that’s happening right now, and I wanted to talk to Mikey. I wanted to just take his pulse and see if he had what it takes to finish and finish strong and win.”<sup>501</sup> Florence’s explanation gives us a glimpse into the raw and multifaceted attributes of joy, as a formal pattern of experience. Formal joy pulses as one of the several life-affirming rhythms of the food truck environment on the show, through several neural and visceral detours. The following is one of joy’s many embodied detours into raw action and expression. On the show, Mikey embodies an exuberant and light persona. He

---

<sup>500</sup> Florence, “Fresh Off,” season 8, episode 5.

<sup>501</sup> Florence, “Fresh Off,” season 8, episode 5.

is passionate about their business venture, but there is a studied calmness to his exuberance. In most instances on the show, he articulates his dogged drive to succeed in the competition in relation with his deep desire to prove something different about the millennial identity. However, in the penultimate episode, when Florence asks Mikey what the competition means for him, and what it means for him to have lasted this long as one of the youngest teams, his cool visage cracks up a bit:

Florence: When you get to this point in the race, all the trucks are just spectacular in their own way. Tell me what's in it for you personally.

Mikey: As being a millennial team, we're here to prove the façade of us being lazy or undetermined or kind of just being given a silver spoon is false.

Florence: Who were your influences in life growing up?

Mikey: Both of my parents. I mean, they're so hardworking. They do anything to succeed and for sure them.

Florence: Tell me about your mom.

Mikey (visibly and viscerally charged): I'm going to cry.

Mikey (in a reflective aside): I just began to cry, and I turn into a bumbling hot mess just because I love my mom. She's the biggest influence in my life.

Mikey (back with Florence, deeply emotional and choking in places): I just—Being here, doing it for my family, they're just the best people, and I'm here to prove that I can do more than anyone imagined.

Florence: You know, tap into who you are and kind of know where you get your fire from, right? I think it's really important. And I want to see you guys cross the finish line.

Mikey: We'll be there.<sup>502</sup>

The cracks in Mikey's demeanor, reveal the passionate and painfully stirring aspects of the joy, which he associates with his vocation. These dimensions of joy—deeply embedded in his *raison d'être*—only show in affectively heightened environments, such as the aforementioned encounter with Florence. The fire that painfully chisels and sculpts the formal undercurrents of Mikey's *raison d'être*, his proud joy of doing more than anyone imagined, comes from elsewhere: his mom and family. If joy requires the simple flexing of the zygomatic major muscle to reveal the

---

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

accidental dimple, it also requires that one recognize joy as the fierce fire from outside, which burns one with another's desire, so that one can do more than anyone imagined. Joy is the other's fire, which one gladly hosts with one's entire musculature, to stretch and sculpt their "muscular imagination" (à la Burke), at the threshold of another.<sup>503</sup> To learn to smile joyfully with a Duchenne smile, or a smile which one's eyes accent through the formation of crow feet and raised cheek muscles is to recognize joy's painful roots intertwined with a repetitive relay: a passage of love and loss.<sup>504</sup> To embody this every certain something of joy is to affirm all of its maddening and gladdening possibilities in relation with other bodies and environments.

In other instances, joy as a pattern of experience relates to truckers' sheer thrill of selling out food or their rejoicing in having participated in a competition so grand. But, joy also comes along with a humbling tinge of sadness, in handing over the food truck keys to Florence upon elimination. When in the last few minutes of E4, S8, *The Breakfast Club* wins immunity, the team's joy is palpable as a joyful assemblage of sharp relief from the anxiety and fear of elimination. The participants' joy is visible in bodily moments of play among the team, such as Papi Chulo's celebratory dance with Carleena, in sensate references to security from elimination in in E2, S8, through rhythmic refrains such as "smells like immunity," or in their letting kids sit in the driving seat of the truck to honk the horn in jest.<sup>505</sup> Joy comes through in fleeting exchanges of humor in E3, S8, when Justin from *Stick 'em Up*, puts on an inflated rubber duck on his mother's insistence to lure customers outside a grocery store, despite his several resistances and confessions later:

---

<sup>503</sup> Burke, *Counter*, 141.

<sup>504</sup> Arthur J Lurigio. "Duchenne Smile." In *Encyclopedia of Deception*, ed. by Timothy R. Levine (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 318-319. doi: 10.4135/9781483306902.n121.

<sup>505</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1, Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

“Holy crap, this stupid duck is working.”<sup>506</sup> Moments of joy are interchanged as indeterminate instances of ignorance, humor, and uncertainty among cousins Carleena and Sarah from Papi Chulo’s Empanadas, in reference to their next challenge base (E2, S8), Pensacola, Florida:

Sarah: I know nothing about Pensacola, like, nothing.

Carleena: I don’t either, but there’s alligators.

Sarah: You think Tyler would make us work with alligators? Alligator empanadas

Carleena: [Laughs] That sounds horrible.

Sarah: That does sound horrible.<sup>507</sup>

If we consider the rhythms and patterns of the food truck experience (whether it be the audience or the competitors themselves), we also need to consider as context, the somatic refracting media that negotiate the said rhythms: case in point, the role of habit. In the following section, I delve into the different habitudes of the food truckers, first through a general reflection on their visceral and verbal responses to different affective forms of everyday and ordinary experiences in season eight (eg: the term “curveball” as a recurring anxiolytic refrain in E5, S8 or the idea of twists and detours facing the food truckers, in the form of “truckstops” in E1, S1).<sup>508</sup> Then, I examine the aesthetic and affective dimensions of such habits (based on my theoretical impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect), with which the food truckers’ experience the life-affirming rhythms of their food truck context? As a memory refresher, from a Deweyan perspective, aesthetic dimensions of habits, imply the embodiment of a satisfactory pace or rhythm for a mindful experience. With mindful habits, one is emotionally aware of the self in relation with others, which increases one’s propensity to move at a satisfactory pace of experience. Affective dimensions of habits, which I consider rhizomatic habits, based on Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the rhizome,

---

<sup>506</sup> Florence, “Sweet Home, season 8, episode 3.

<sup>507</sup> Florence, “New Marching,” season 8, episode 2.

<sup>508</sup> Florence, “Fresh Off,” season 8, episode 5; “The Great Food Truck Race S01E01,” The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 2, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_InJ1Bq2Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_InJ1Bq2Rw)



respond to open-ended fragmentary experiences, which transform both the habit and its habitus. One can embody rhizomatic habits, like the on-going creation and destruction of short term memory. With respect to my media artifact, I examine how food truckers embody aesthetically mindful habits? How do they embody rhizomatic habits of experience on the show? Where and how do I intersect with their experience, as I bear witness to the act of criticism?

**Reflections on everyday and ordinary experiences from the show.** The life-affirming rhythms feature food truckers' bodily comportments and habits of responding to the pressures of the competition along with the creative challenges in store. For example, Carleena and Sarah approach their local/contextual ignorance of Pensacola with humor and try to imagine some ridiculous food combination related to the place. Their humorous orientation sounds like a healthy way to compensate for their ignorance, as opposed to feeling threatened and insecure about it. In another instance on E2, S8, The Breakfast Club is reflecting on their victory from E1. In response, Mikey boasts, "They don't call me a brunch aficionado for nothing."<sup>509</sup> Taylor and Ashanti playfully challenge Mikey's claim and sort of pull his leg, by asking, "Who calls you that? Yeah."<sup>510</sup> Mikey is a bit defensive and retorts, "I am. People call me that. Yeah. In the Industry."<sup>511</sup> Taylor and Ashanti, smile and note that they already agreed with it. The tone of the encounter may connote rivalry, yet the context of this exchange, based on the participants' habitual interactions with each other is humorous.

Other contestants on the show are habituated to the life-affirming rhythms of the competition through more astringent embodiments of anger and distress. In E1, S8 Carleena Lara-

---

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

Bregatta of Papi Chulo's Empanadas remarks on her dad, Papi Chulo's short temper: "My dad can be a little short-tempered, especially in these high pressured situations."<sup>512</sup> She, on the other hand, is seen negotiating the nervous task of buying a whole lot of ingredients, before a challenge with a calmer bodily state, voice, and statements like: "We'll get to that. One thing at a time."<sup>513</sup> But, she also states: "We're feeling stressed."<sup>514</sup> At the prospect of buying ingredients under stress, Shona House can be seen having a mild confrontation with one of her sons. He says: "Focus!" She retorts: "I am focused."<sup>515</sup> In a reflective vignette, she laments on her team's buying style: "We are not good shopping together. We're just going crazy. We can't get it together."<sup>516</sup>

Similarly, Sarah, the niece from Papi Chulo's Empanadas' reflects on the crazy-making buying process: "Time is ticking and flying away from us, and the anxiety starts to build...I am getting really frustrated. He [Papi Chulo] knows what he's cooking, but I know what we need to get that cooking."<sup>517</sup> In response to the pronounced traces of anxiety, marking the life-affirming rhythms of the food truck competition, other competitors such as Mikey and Ashanti from The Breakfast Club, perform rhythmic and playful "synchronized dance" moves to channel all that nervous energy in E1, S8.<sup>518</sup> Mikey observes: "I see Wicked Good Seafood on the corner of the street. They're screaming. They're making a scene. I decide that we're gonna put on costumes, and have a dance party, just to kind of get that buzz going and get the people to stop by our truck."<sup>519</sup> So, The Breakfast Club string along "Bacon, egg, and cheese!" to create a rhythmic

---

<sup>512</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

<sup>516</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

dance, which is energetic, fun, and catchy.<sup>520</sup> Ashanti responds to their playful dance strategy to confess that they do not mind playing the fool if it means more money for them.

As I witness all of these experiences on my laptop screen, I realize that some of the show's anxious energy affects my reflective process. I notice a certain constricting quality in my breathing, along with a prickly sensation so familiar to my body, as anxiety. So, I take a few more breaths to re-distribute my bodily attention to the show. But, these mindful gestures also accompany some mindless self-interruptions, such as tapping the home screen of my iPhone, something I notice I do when I feel restless and/or stuck. I also feel inspired, when I see competitors create random dance sequences in a moment of play, especially in the face of stress. I feel joy and solidarity along with the participants at the end of their day when they hug each other in tears and declare their pride for each other. They did the best that they could, no matter how they performed. I experience thrilling goose-bumps when in E2, S8, Mr. Po' Boys wins the Pensacola challenge with a whopping sale of \$1725. I relate with Esther feeling validated, and looking triumphant in front of her competitors, through her forceful hand gestures.<sup>521</sup> But, my goose-bumps prick me uncomfortably, when the show enters its elimination space in a particular episode. For example, I feel my heart sinking when Papi Chulo's Empanadas has to hand over its keys to Florence, after elimination in E2, S8.

In sum, Papi Chulo, Carleena, Shona, Sarah, Mikey, Ashanti, and I have vastly different responses to the affective form of anxiety, that is bound to escalate under pressure, as part of the show's pace of unfolding. Carleena seems to be mindful of the task at hand, minding her mind and body to observe the needs of the moment, while acknowledging its anxiolytic qualities. She

---

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

<sup>521</sup> Florence, "New Marching, season 8, episode 2.

embodies pace-making qualities, which are evident from her remarks on an affectively charged exchange between her cousin Sarah and her father, Papi Chulo: “At the end, eventually, we love each other. We’re gonna hug it out, and move on and we’re gonna refocus and get on with the race.”<sup>522</sup> Her father, perhaps distributes his anxiety about the competition, through uneven (but possibly effective) bodily dispensations of anger. When he tells his frustrated niece, Sarah “don’t get upset at little things,” she voices what makes her anxious in the process: “I’m not upset. I’m just not being heard.”<sup>523</sup> Sarah’s approach to managing her anxiety seems like her ability to name and identify the source of her frustration. In relation, as a critic in charge of evaluating my media artifact, I try to re-imagine a relaxing place, where I could breathe with the lung capacity of an oxygenated forest, for instance, the redwoods from my recent visit to coastal California. I am able to mind my anxiety by re-routing my breathing based on mnemonic modes of relaxation. Furthermore, the entire experience of this particular food-based close reading becomes quite torturous when I reckon with my own hunger levels during writing. Each sensate life-affirming rhythm of the production experience, (whether it is participants’ playing with different ingredients, or taste-testing their delicacies) whets my appetite even more, ultimately disrupting my attention, because I cannot concentrate on an empty stomach.

**Aesthetic dimensions of habits.** From the point of the show at large, there are several moments in its unfolding, which embody the aesthetic dimensions of experience, in resonance with Dewey’s theory of aesthetics. Aesthetic experiences are related to everyday habits and ordinary practices of attention. Aesthetic experiences engage the sensory, sensational, sensitive, sentimental, and sensuous aspects of experience as life-affirming rhythms in experience, in relation

---

<sup>522</sup> Florence, “The Big,” season 8, episode 1.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

with an environment.<sup>524</sup> For example, in E5, S8, the show's special challenge is related to a peach appetizer. Florence frames the potential win from the particular challenge as an "appetizing advantage," for the teams, thus titillating the senses and sensations, in a manner characteristic of Deweyan aesthetics.<sup>525</sup> The diverse ways in which the show's participants distribute their vital energy and somatic attention to different aspects of production and consumption, remind the audiences, about the aesthetic embeddedness of food, especially if one attends to it mindfully. Indeed, Dewey's sense-range is the Jamesian appeal to plug into one's cubic capacity, with which to savor and plug out of the fleeting moment (whether calming or emetic). This pragmatic orientation is an alternative to one's endless urge to capture a fresh-off-the-fetish Instagram or another social media iteration of a lived experience.

For example, a mindful gustatory practice, can involve paying attention to food's different sonic, olfactory, and haptic sensations in concert, which many interactions in the show foreground: the juicy crunch of a peach, the playful diversity of its textures, the nauseating experience of scaling a fish, the seared taste of fresh scallops, the fresh, hot, and soft beignets, or loaded nachos topped with melted cheese, and crisp bacon.<sup>526</sup> With a habitual practice, one can start identifying the sensuous immediacy of sense-based attributes (hopefully without the condescension related to tastefulness), such as crispness, cleanness, freshness, tanginess, creaminess, or "savory balance" with respect to everyday consumption practices.<sup>527</sup> In fact, as the food truckers demonstrate, the practice of co-locating a gustatory sensation in a lexical signification, can potentially help one to experience, "joint perception," or synesthesia, a perceptual fugue of senses, commingling word

---

<sup>524</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 169.

<sup>525</sup> Florence, "Fresh Off," season 8, episode 5.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.; Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1; Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

<sup>527</sup> Florence, "Fresh Off," season 8, episode 5.

and taste, or sound, color, and smell.<sup>528</sup> Even though synesthesia is an involuntary and rarely occurring experience in individuals, I am suggesting that, at least with the daily practice of mindful habits, everyday consumption of food has the potential to become a synesthetic experience, over and above an aesthetic one.<sup>529</sup>

For instance, the show in its overall theme attempts a lexical-gustatory synesthesia (the fusing of word and region-based taste), especially through playful puns in episode titles: “Things Get Berry Interesting” (E2, S7), “High Steaks in Texas” (E4, S6), and “Potatoes in Pocatello” (E4, S4) among others.<sup>530</sup> And, as the show’s participants have suggested, what goes on in the body in terms of attention, relates with how that body (re)presents itself in relation to its environment, whether it is through somatically attuned food or mindful habits of speech, oriented toward an audience. If one can cultivate gustatory habits oriented toward a synesthetic consumption of food, a similar intertwining richness of senses may be expressed through speech, writing, dialogue, listening, and other modes of everyday rhetoric, in a rhythmic relation with everyday communicative environments. So, instead of striving to become well-adjusted speech heads, students and practitioners of everyday rhetoric can look to develop wellness-attuned bodies. Wellness-attuned bodies can balance out the sole economy of logic, reason, and rationality, through an infoldment of the extra-economical, extra-cognitive, rhythmic, playful, and sensate

---

<sup>528</sup> Jennifer L. Hellier, ed, *The Five Senses and Beyond: The Encyclopedia of Perception* (Westport: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2016), 179-180. Accessed March 6, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> “Things Get Berry Interesting,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 2, Hulu, accessed March 6, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193120>; “High Steaks in Texas,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 6, episode 4, Hulu, accessed March 6, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1087437>; Tyler Florence, “Potatoes in Pocatello,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 4, episode 4, The Food Network, (New York: Septem 1, 2013), iTunes.

aspects of everyday experience.

As it concerns different participants on the show, Carleena is the most likely to embody the life-affirming rhythms of the competition as an aesthetic experience, because of her consistent experiential pace in relation to her immediate environment. She is able to organize her acquired predispositions, connected to her past experiences, in order to mind the current moment, while projecting her habitual responses on similar future situations. Similarly, Mikey and Ashanti are able to attend to their bodies and minds in a fraught moment by incorporating creative approaches to food and sales (e.g., their dance moves), which help them reframe their task at hand into something enjoyable. Even when Mikey heats up in moments of stress, Ashanti and Taylor can calm him down just by communicating calmly with him. They balance out the team's edginess. Within the team's perception of the competition's pace, everyday experiences of the food truck context, flow to one another as linkages, with necessary rhythmic punctuations of rest, and pauses. In this way, The Breakfast Club seem to embody the competition mindfully because of which the team's everyday and ordinary experiences move in patterns, ebbs, and flows toward a sense of consummation but not stasis from a Deweyan stance.

In a related moment, in E3, S8, Brandon from Braised in the South can be seen comparing the team's past bodily habits in the competition (especially in response to the intensity of the challenges), and how they can witness themselves approaching the competition differently, in their evolution in the show: "I think in New Orleans and in Pensacola, we were so serious and rigid. We thought that was the only way we were going to win it. But taking a step back, relaxing, enjoying this experience is going to come through in our food. And I think it's gonna help us."<sup>531</sup> Brandon's

---

<sup>531</sup> Florence, "Sweet Home," season 8, episode 3.

re-orientation to the competition can be explained through Dewey's approach to habits as our somatic-moralistic refracting media, which help one relate with another. Habitual media act like chemical reagents, which do not produce molecular transformations, but simply receive, rearrange, filter and help us make sensible patterns of our body-mind interchanges with an environment. A re-orientation in Brandon's reflections on the competition, can be attributed to a chemically reagentive habitual shift in their team's bodily and mental make-up; this habitual shift receives, rearranges, and filters the team's serious and rigid habits of attention, practices, and pace of experience to the competition so far, into something far lighter, playful, and relaxing. What changes in the team's collective body, translates into the mind of the food they create together, and vice-versa. The team's new mindful strategy of embodying their social embeddedness in Alabama's lived experience in its sweet and hospitable rhythms ultimately shifts an otherwise overwhelming experience into an aesthetic experience: an ongoing matter of everyday perception, appreciation, and enjoyment, for a gustatory community of producers and consumers.

**Affective dimensions of habits.** From an affective dimension of habitual responses, perhaps anxiety and fear can be negotiated, even with a fragmented or jagged pace of experience. Perhaps mindfulness and mindlessness are intertwined in a middle place or a milieu as a passage of bodily intensities, which dim and accentuate simultaneously, without ever being fully one or the other. Furthermore, some teams frame the challenges of the competition as fear of loss, fear of the unknown, or feelings of dread at the prospect of leaving the tournament and going home (The Southern Frenchie). Most of the teams at different points in the show, sound the refrain: "I do not want to go home."<sup>532</sup> Some frame it as an opportunity cost, in that the whole exercise becomes

---

<sup>532</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1; Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.



quite pointless, if some of the teams so much time apart from their kids and family, only to go back home (Braised from the South). Others approach the competition as a desire to do something significant for their little daughters so that they can believe in dreams coming true. Sarah from Papi Chulo's has a different approach to the challenge: "It's not about winning or losing. It's about selling, selling, selling."<sup>533</sup> The Breakfast Club, on the other hand, focuses on producing a creative "out of the box" dish special or "mak[ing] a play on a grilled-peach bruschetta," thereby focusing on creative rhythmic play (eg: Mikey's reference to a dish, which is "ooey, gooey, and delicious"). Their creative rhythm reframes a sense of loss or defeat into an attitude of play.<sup>534</sup> The affective dimensions of habits do not necessarily point to a desirable directionality in terms of a desirable outcome, as one is bound to experience in a Deweyan take on habits. Instead, the affective dimensions of habits remind us of our cubic capacity of being sensibly alive, through simultaneous undulations of triumph and failure, play and plight, love and loss, rejection and acceptance. In E5, S8, Ryan from Mr. Po' Boys seems to embody a rhizomatic orientation, particularly through a milieu-like middle place he ascribes to the competition, in which a rhizome connects with disparate everyday experiences through asignifying ruptures that challenge traditionally systematic notions of a definite beginning and end. A rhizomatic habit of experiencing the everyday starts over from the place where connections break off: "I'm excited, we still in the race. Every city, every day is a new start, so everybody is at zero, right now."<sup>535</sup> The obvious demarcations of time and space, help the show unfold on the axes of feasibility. But, a rhizomatic habit is more about re-molding the perceptions of linear systematicity through pushing a reset button of sorts, within which our

---

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> Florence, "Fresh Off," season 8, episode 5.

<sup>535</sup> Florence, "Fresh Off," season 8, episode 5.

binary circuits can experience a mu state, a state between plugging and unplugging into a power source. This mu state is perhaps a non-binary, non-linear, and lateral space of embodying powerlessness and powerfulness.

So, perhaps, Carleena, Papi Chulo, Shona, Sarah, Mikey, Ashanti, Brandon, Ryan, and I, all practice rhizomatic habits of plugging into our bodily rhythms, our sources of power, while unplugging out of them simultaneously, through overwhelming moments of regression, retardation, and suspension. In doing so, dichotomous notions of mindfulness and mindlessness are challenged in experience. Perhaps, a reflection like Brandon's, which acknowledges his team's serious and rigid pace of experience in earlier challenges, opens up a productive space for approaching a new challenge with a new orientation. In this way, our anxieties have a breathing space to vary. Their constricting qualities can expand. Our re-attention to breathing one breath at a time and doing one thing at a time can momentarily conquer bodily constrictions. We can capture, what binds us in frustrating somatic discomfort, for a fleeting second, through play, dance, movement, breathing, laughing or feeling angry. For example in E4, S8 when Florence challenges the teams to showcase their "self-promotion" strategies, The Breakfast Club responds to the bodily stress of the challenge, through music, dance, rhythmic movements of "alternate snapping, booming, clapping," playful wearable bacon and egg costumes.<sup>536</sup> Even though they have a desirable outcome in mind, I would consider their habitual response, rhizomatic. The team as a rhizome queers any traditional notion of self-promotion. Instead, the team establishes diverse connections with each other and the perceived crowds, through non-conforming, perceptive, mimetic, and cognitive bodily rhythms, rendering the production and consumption contexts open

---

<sup>536</sup> Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4.

and miscible. In doing so, the team transforms its own experience of self-promotion along with the habitus, which experiences the team's rhizomatic endeavor in relation. Such responses to stress can open up a flexible and productive space of more experiences to come. Then our anxieties re-emerge, as prickly offshoots of momentary discomfort, from release itself. We start again from a milieu of mindfulness and mindlessness, challenging any fixed notions of one or the other. The aesthetic can become a consistently complex drama of affective contingencies, as opposed to a simple contingent of consistency. The following insights on show's pattern of appeals toward immediate and perceived audiences is another step toward understanding the teams' aesthetic and affective interplay of habits and bodily states, along with the critic who is entangled with the media representation.

## AUDIENCE

In my analysis, I realize that audience appeals to both immediate and perceived audiences of *The Great Food Truck Race* work out in certain themes or patterns. The themes are related to sub-cultural consumption (hipsters, college town kids, foodies), nationalistic, millennial, and heritage/taste-based identities. These patterns of appeals can be traced across all the seasons in general, while in the following section, I focus primarily on the season eight patterns.

**Patterns of appeals.** One of the immediate target audiences for the first episode of season eight is, "the beautiful people of the French quarters."<sup>537</sup> The immediate audience of the French quarters looks racially diverse with a desire for eclectic flavors, which the food trucks offer. In another shot, of E1, S8, Steven from *Braised in the South*, remarks that they need to go to Southland Park because of a desirable target audience: "Southland Park's supposed to be, like,

---

<sup>537</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

younger, just kind of hipsters, whatever, looking for a bite to eat to grab with their beer.”<sup>538</sup> In subsequent episodes of season eight, the same truck can be seen trying to approach the “business lunch crowd” in Pensacola, Florida, or “the football town” of Tuscaloosa, with “tailgate food,” similar to their business strategy in New Orleans.<sup>539</sup>

When the teams reach Nashville, Tennessee, Mikey from the Breakfast Club reflects on how the Nashville audience is right up their brunch alley because of the kind of consumers it represents: “It seems like it’s a really young, hip, and quirky town. I think they’re going to really be into our brunch items. Brunch is trendy. Nashville is a pretty trendy city.”<sup>540</sup> Steven’s and Mikey’s remarks, reinforce existing research on the target audiences for the gourmet food truck culture at large: predominantly white, young, hip, trendy, and technologically savvy urban professionals. Interestingly, in E2, S8, the local context of the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, influences the sort of the appeals to identity, both the show and the participants, seem to make to their immediate and perceived audiences. During the teamwork challenge, each team is assigned a color: red, white, and blue, also the colors in the U.S. national flag. The show’s *patriotic appeal to national identity*, through team-based culinary offerings, which embody the proud colors of the national insignia is particularly poignant and rhetorical, since the immediate audience is an armed forces group at the Naval Air Station. However, such appeals would work just as well for perceived audiences that tune in to feel patriotic through visual consumption of the food trucks, also including those, that may scoff at the nationalistic overtones of the show. Regardless, consistent with the structural appeals of nationalistic pride in the show, Stick ‘Em Up and The Breakfast Club coming

---

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Florence, “New Marching,” season 8, episode 2; Florence, “Sweet Home,” season 8, episode 3.

<sup>540</sup> Florence, “Hot Chicken,” season 8, episode 4.

together as Team Red, can be seen appealing to the national identity through their team work. Shona House from Stick 'Em Up is visibly excited, with a glint of pride in her eyes, when she tells the team what they will add to The Breakfast Club's French toast: "Hey, hey, I got it. Raspberries, we'll do some whipped cream. We've got some blackberries. Guess what? Red, white, and berry French toast."<sup>541</sup> In E4, S8, when the teams are asked to promote themselves, Braised from the South decides to create a make-shift "American flag" photo-booth for consumers, which features selfies with them and their barbecue.<sup>542</sup> Nick's remarks about this particular strategy for self-promotion reveals their kairotic appeal to national identity: "What's more American than barbecues and selfies? Nothing, 'cause that's what America is about right now."<sup>543</sup> The executive chefs from Braised in the South seem to know something concrete about their consumer pulse, even if it is knowledge based on conventional wisdom or simply professional experience. Either way, through their knowledge, the team can be seen appealing to the American identity, writ large.

Similarly, in the inaugural episode of season eight, the competitors can be seen appealing to their perceived audiences. These appeals to identity, are rooted in the food truckers' work ethic, and regionally, nationally, and/or transnationally inspired culinary practices. For example, in their introduction, The Breakfast Club from Philadelphia, which features three relatively younger food truck participants in their teens (Mikey, Taylor, and Ashanti) issue an enthused challenge to remedying negative perceptions of *millennial identity*. They dare to upend these pre-existing biases, through their breakfast offerings: "We're the Breakfast Club from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We serve breakfast-brunch inspired cuisine. We're the youngest. People are gonna

---

<sup>541</sup> Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

<sup>542</sup> Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

underestimate us, but we're ready. We're here to break the mold for the millennials being lazy, being entitled. The Breakfast Club is in New Orleans. We're ready to go. Let's go! [All cheer]...Hashtag, Breakfast Club, Here to Stay."<sup>544</sup> Furthermore, in E4, S8, Mikey extends the adjective "trendy" to the millennial identity, particularly as it abounds, in an "art district" neighborhood of Nashville.<sup>545</sup> Mikey believes that The Breakfast Club embodies similar attributes to experience a gustatory limbic resonance with Nashville. Ashanti affirms and reinforces the same millennial identity in E4, S8, with their competitive performance as forceful proof: "I think people are starting to realize that they need to stop underestimating us, and we're here to win."<sup>546</sup>

While some food truckers' appeal to millennial audiences, some utilize the *regional diversity* of their food offerings to connect with *sensory or taste-based identities*. For example, In E1, S7, Vinny from Carretto Siciliano, explicitly announces his Sicilian roots, whose culinary offshoots, he wants to share with the audiences.<sup>547</sup> Similarly, in E1, S8, Carleena Lara-Bregatta of Papi Chulo's Empanadas leverages her Dominican heritage, her "crazy beautiful dad, Papi Chulo," and contextual knowledge of the Dominican and New Orleans palate to invite identities, which might readily identify with such tastes: "Our people would be very proud. You can't be Dominican without guava in your life...Dedicate this to our people, right?...So, we decide to make guava and gruyère beignets. And we're gonna add a kick of cayenne pepper into them. Dominican, cheesy, and then that New Orleans spice all in one."<sup>548</sup> Or when the teams arrive in Nashville, Tennessee, the host Tyler Florence introduces the city to the food trucks, from a sensory perspective:

---

<sup>544</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>545</sup> Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4.

<sup>546</sup> Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4.

<sup>547</sup> "Family Face-Off: A Family Affair," *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 1, Hulu, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193122>

<sup>548</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

Nashville's "hot-fried chicken," one of whose hot-sensation variants "400 degrees" tastes like "deepest-pits-of-hell fire."<sup>549</sup> Nashville's introduction is likewise an appeal to taste or sensation-based local, remote or perceived identities, similar to Texas in E3, S1 ("Where's the beef?") which one team ("Grill 'Em All") refers to as "the hardcore carnivores of America."<sup>550</sup>

The show's guest in E4, S8 Aquí Hines, enhances the sensory appeal of hot-fried chicken when she refers to it as the "best comfort food."<sup>551</sup> Particularly, when she talks about dish called "400 degrees" from her own restaurant, her words pronounce the indulgent-sensate experience of food for the Nashville audience of the episode: "It's going to make everything tingle, but it's going to get you going, and that's what you want."<sup>552</sup> In E5, S8, the specials challenge similarly features a peach, which Ryan and Esther from Mr. Po' Boys, correlate with Georgia: "It's Georgia. Of course, we're going to have a peach challenge. I knew we were going to do peaches. Of course."<sup>553</sup> Braised from the South humorously recounts their deep familiarity with the fruit, because of their Southern connection: "Peach cobbler, peach compote, peach tea. Pickled peach, peach puree, Grilled peach. Vinaigrette....[Laughs] Uh, that's all we got."<sup>554</sup> Overall, the regional specificity of taste, "textures," sensation, and sensoria connects the show, the participating food truckers, and their audiences, in an exciting gustatory tapestry.<sup>555</sup>

As an audiencing and feeling rhetorical critic, with South Asian roots and ample exposure to a Western life, I feel intrigued with the food truckers'/show's appeal to taste and sensation. I

---

<sup>549</sup> Florence, "Hot Chicken," season 8, episode 4.

<sup>550</sup> "The Great Food Truck Race S01E03," The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 2, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4IWSkRrQt8>

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

<sup>553</sup> Florence, "Fresh Off," season 8, episode 5.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Florence, "Fresh Off," season 8, episode 5.

wonder why one's tongue has such an unconscious hold on one's identity, especially in the way, it tingles and affirms the gustatory attachment to one's roots. I wonder why our sensoria have the capacity to trigger, what guest chef Maumaus in E5, S8 calls, "food nostalgia."<sup>556</sup> I remind myself that I can travel the ends of earth to assume a well-traveled and seasoned identity. I would still only be fooling myself, that my tongue can ever forget the roots of my food: a heavenly aromatic fugue of North Indian pickle (*'aam ka achaar'*), paranthas (toasted flatbread) and North American French pressed coffee, delivered in a mouthful, with a sunny wintry backdrop of the modest Shivalik foothills. These are my food rhizomes of ordinary experiences, in rhythmic relation with several national and transnational ecologies. My experience is temporally, materially, and culturally awash with several mnemonic tastes, titillated beyond torture for a second, before returning to the analysis.

Shona House of Stick 'Em Up appeals to a different kind of audience. She establishes her Southern identity/roots fairly early in E1, S8 and self-identifies, through her Southern twang, as "just a crazy, ol' country girl that knows how to cook."<sup>557</sup> Furthermore, she accents her culinary passion with a nostalgic nod to her sons' "memaw" (maternal grand figure), to reframe the experience of preparing an unfamiliar delicacy, which she only knows how to prepare in a "Yes. Kind of. Maybe," way.<sup>558</sup> She makes the task appear quite facile when Justin and Landon ask Shona if she knows how to make beignets. Shona responds that they are just "fried biscuit dough" and reminds them: "Remember how memaw used to fix those [beignets] for us?...It might not have been called beignet, but Memaw used biscuit dough."<sup>559</sup> In E2, S8, the memaws re-appear, in

---

<sup>556</sup> Ibid.

<sup>557</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid.



reference to the Red Snapper challenge. Shona taps into the centennial culinary wisdom of the memaws, to approach the Pensacola food special. With continual references to her memaws, Shona upholds her heritage, while minimizing the perceived threat of a challenge, that also features seemingly better trained, or more cosmopolitan “executive chefs, these people that own restaurants.”<sup>560</sup> Remarkably, in the first episode of season one, another Southern team Ragin’ Cajun (Louisiana) utilizes a similar reference to an old maternal figure (“mama’s recipes,”) deeply connected to their Southern identity, to inspire their eclectic offerings in the competition.<sup>561</sup>

In an overall sense, the show appeals to a *sub-identity*, located within Southern, Sicilian, or Dominican heritages, across several seasons. That sub-identity is a culinary connection with *one’s maternal roots*, which several food truckers leverage through their references to their mamas’ recipes.<sup>562</sup> Particularly, in season eight, the show’s inclusion of teams’ appeal to their *Southern identity* is a rhetorical move, which may resonate with audience members who pride their Southern roots and/or seek the nostalgic comfort of those roots, readily palpable in taste. In E3, S8, when the teams head to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Mikey from the Breakfast Club invokes popular notions of a Southern identity again, but this time, its relation to hospitality: “I am so excited to be in Tuscaloosa. You can almost feel the Southern hospitality in the air. Everyone looks so happy on the streets.”<sup>563</sup> Immediate and perceived audiences of this particular episode might feel more attuned to Mikey’s reflections if they have offered or experienced the Southern hospitality.

However, there is more than an appeal to taste for certain food truckers such as Papi

---

<sup>560</sup> Florence, “The Big,” season 8, episode 1.

<sup>561</sup> “The Great Food Truck Race S01E01,” The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 2, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_InJ1Bq2Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_InJ1Bq2Rw)

<sup>562</sup> “Family Face-Off: A Family Affair,” *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 1, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193122>

<sup>563</sup> Florence, “Sweet Home,” season 8, episode 3.

Chulo's Empanadas. For example, Papi Chulo's dream to win the food truck race has to do with his immense desire to build a school for poor little children in the Dominican Republic with the prize money. He displays a sense of loyalty to the community from where he hails, a desire to pay it back in kind which might move similarly identified audiences in the New Orleans area to partake of Papi Chulo's beignets and co-contribute to his dream. With mildly watery eyes, Papi Chulo says, "That's my dream."<sup>564</sup> Likewise, in E1, S7, Vinny dreams of winning the food truck challenge, because of his desire to make his mother's dream come true.<sup>565</sup> He wants his mother to own a restaurant and share their Sicilian zest for cooking, with the world.<sup>566</sup> In the show's interwoven landscape of food truck texts, contexts, and audiences, the interactive role of the critic's embodied judgment is especially important. Since the body of the critic constantly engages with those in the media representation, it becomes a crucial sensory site and inventional resource for co-producing and adjudicating the aesthetic and affective dimensions of represented experiences. The following section accounts for several moments of critical judgment pertaining to the aesthetic and affective embodiments of race, class, gender, representation, power, and sexuality in the show.

---

<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> "Family Face-Off: A Family Affair," *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 1, Hulu, accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193122>

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

## JUDGMENT

Season eight presents a fairly equitable racial representation with food truck families and friends exhibiting mixed race/ ethnically diverse (eg: Mr. Po' Boys, The Breakfast Club, Papi Chulo's Empanadas, Wicked Good Seafood) and Caucasian heritages (eg: Braised in the South, The Southern Frenchie, Stick 'Em Up). The other seasons have similarly equitable racial representation, especially the inaugural season. I perceive some unstated racial tensions in E2, S8 when the top two teams from the last episode are required to pick out another team as creative collaborators for the teamwork challenge. While The Breakfast Club picks out Stick 'Em Up because of cuisine-based resonance, Braised from the South picks out The Southern Frenchie ("an easy choice"): "Feel like they're from the South, we're from the South. We should have no problems with a cohesive dish."<sup>567</sup> Both food trucks have predominantly white participants. However, in my observation, even Mr. Po' Boys is technically from the South Central region (Dallas, Texas). Besides, they also have mixed race participants. Mr. Po' Boys admit, that they thought, they would be "the first-round draft picks," since they won the specials challenge in the first episode.<sup>568</sup> However, when Mr. Po' Boys realize, that they are paired with Papi Chulo's Empanadas, Ryan's reaction is hard to read: "...but Papi Chulo, you know, he's a very...uh (pauses)...what's the word?"<sup>569</sup> Cedric replies, "Passionate." Cedric, Ryan, and Esther repeat the word and laugh, "Passionate."<sup>570</sup>

In the context of the encounter, I do not have any clear answers for why they associate the word passionate with Papi Chulo or if it is even their first word of choice. If passionate is their

---

<sup>567</sup> Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

<sup>568</sup> Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid.

<sup>570</sup> Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

first word of choice, does it have any racial implications, given Papi Chulo's Dominican heritage? Is cohesion a matter of racial identities, or is it culinary? Or, it is impossible to separate intersectional bodily significations from culinary practices? I do not have any definite conclusions, except for a lingering sense of wonder about the politics of team picking in E2, S8. E3, S8 features a minor but racially charged moment, which implicates gender in more pronounced ways, than other instances I have critiqued in the show. The Breakfast Club is deciding on a place to park in Tuscaloosa, and finally realize that the Court House may be the best possible location as Ashanti, a young black woman, suggests. Mikey makes an innuendo related to Ashanti's location suggestion and winks: "And Ashanti loves herself a good convict."<sup>571</sup>

While Mikey does not overtly mention the convict's race, he is making the remark in the context of a young black woman, whose sexuality and femininity (e.g., the hypersexual, "free woman," Jezebel stereotype) are themselves fraught spaces of negotiation in the American context.<sup>572</sup> Furthermore, as Kelly Welch writes, the unconscious ways in which race and crime dovetail in American culture, more often than not, underscore the unfortunate interchangeability of blackness and criminality.<sup>573</sup> Mikey could have used the word judge, plaintiff, attorney, or clerk, instead of convict, which is precisely what indicts Mikey's comment with racial undertones. Mikey's seemingly playful innuendo seems to perpetuate two kinds of damaging stereotypes. One, his comment disservices Ashanti's perceived image as a wanton young black woman, who will buck the law purposely to date an ex-convict. Ashanti's imagined transgressions are in defiance of

---

<sup>571</sup> Florence, "Sweet Home," season 8, episode 3.

<sup>572</sup> Mahassen Mgadmi. "Black Women's Identity: Stereotypes, Respectability and Passionlessness (1890-1930)." *Revue LISA / LISA e-Journal* no. Vol. VII (2009): 42-43.

<sup>573</sup> Kelly Welch. "Black Criminal Stereotypes and Racial Profiling," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 23 (2007): 276-278.

White patriarchy, which expects and socializes women to be more sexually modest, docile, or chaste, and in majority of cases, lawfully wedded wives to cis-gendered husband, in normative heterosexual economies.<sup>574</sup> Second, Mikey's comment performs a kind of racial profiling through the word "convict," which fuses race and criminal intent, while upholding the "young Black man as a criminal threat" narrative in American culture.<sup>575</sup>

In a similar vein, in E3, S8, Mikey (The Breakfast Club) suggests, that the air of Southern hospitality is palpable in Tuscaloosa, and everyone looks happy on the streets. Famous dessert chef Jan Potter, who features in E3, S8 echoes similar sentiments related to Southern hospitality, with a particular focus on sweetness and tradition.<sup>576</sup> I wonder, which segment of the population in Alabama, responds to this narrative of hospitality, the most. Are the ones, who offer this kind of traditional hospitality, able to do so, because they get to experience it too? Do the ones, who are equipped to be hospitable, owe their racial, gender, class, sexuality, and ability-based privileges to the same tradition? If sweet is definitely a taste that connotes Southern hospitality, what other bitter tastes, does the show's narrative mask? I wonder about the disenfranchisements, because of which, some sections of the Southern population are definitely on the streets, but not the sweet kind of happy that Mikey projects on the audience. I wonder, if because of their basic conditions of living, they may never taste this grand scripted narrative that Mikey and Jan Potter produce so effortlessly.

On a related note, the gender representation (not including individuals' gender identity/performance) in the show, feels problematic since most food trucks have male owners at the helm, except for Shona House from Stick 'Em Up who steers her food truck with the help of

---

<sup>574</sup> Mgadmi, "Black Women," 43.

<sup>575</sup> Welch, "Black Criminal," 278.

<sup>576</sup> Florence, "Sweet Home," season 8, episode 3.

her sons. This observation troubles the affective dimensions of my critical sensibilities. However, apropos of the field-based ethic of reflexivity and accountability (and if I may, flexibility), perhaps a sense of unease is a helpful approach to the analyses. There is always a possibility, that the movement of the show contradicts my opening feelings, vis-à-vis what seems to be an existing narrative about inequitable gender distribution in the North American food truck culture. There is, however, a fraught moment of gender negotiation in episode one of season eight when Papi Chulo re-invokes his authority as the Chef to discipline his niece Sarah. He chastises her grimly:

Papi Chulo: Who's the Chef?

Sarah (submissively): You, Chef.

Papi Chulo: Well, thank you. Just say yes to me all the time...Okay, all the time.

Sarah: Yes, sir.<sup>577</sup>

Despite the friendly bond that the father, daughter, and niece share as part of Papi Chulo's Empanadas, this exchange exhibits a charged moment, in which socially scripted performances of masculinity and femininity are troublesome to me. I am careful to not project my automatic (but also painfully experienced) habits of challenging, the perceived disciplining of a female body, at the hands of a male body. I am careful because I do not want to reify and re-inscribe the narrative I am trying to challenge through my suspicion. Perhaps, this is my attempt to experience critical self-portraiture, which Morris encourages, in embodied and performative modes of rhetorical criticism.<sup>578</sup> Papi Chulo reflects on his exchange with Sarah, confessing his hurt feelings: "Sarah made me so upset. Because she putting me down. She don't appreciate that I was the Chef."<sup>579</sup> Sarah attempts to reason with Papi in the manner of someone, who is inter-generationally different from her uncle:

---

<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

<sup>578</sup> Morris, "(Self)-Portraiture," 32-33.

<sup>579</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

Sarah: This is not going to work, if we can't hear each other, it's not gonna work.  
Papi Chulo (sounding irritated): But do you see how you acting?  
Sarah: How am I acting to you?  
Papi Chulo: Don't act like your mom.  
Sarah (retorts): This not about my mother.  
Papi Chulo: You don't stop talking.<sup>580</sup>

I try to empathize with Papi Chulo's feelings of feeling small in front of her niece. But, I also cannot help but wonder if his appeal to authority in feeling small and demanding Sarah's acquiescence is, in fact, a re-assertion of his masculinity in the food truck context. I wonder if there are misogynistic traces in his performance of masculinity when he asks Sarah to not act like her mom, an act that conflates with talking too much. So, I leave my suspicions open for the moment and just embrace the bodily discomfort that this exchange between an uncle and his niece triggers in my body. A little later in the show, Papi Chulo and Sarah seem to have called a truce. He tells Sarah that he loves her in a sincere tone, while she apologizes to him. He apologizes too and remarks emotionally: "I'm sorry too. Okay, You don't have to be sorry...I do this for you."<sup>581</sup> Love definitely seems to be an emotional undercurrent in the fraught exchange. In an afterthought vignette in which all three sit together, Sarah laughs and cries at the same time as she attempts to resist and reframe the perceived reactions of audiences including mine: "We're not fucked up. We're not a fucked up family. We just got a lot going on."<sup>582</sup> But, loving reconciliations still do not explain the gendered tensions on the show, except for just accenting their presence. It is an inconvenient impasse of emotional stuckness and mobility, a holding pattern of counterintuitive affects, to which I bear witness in writing and reflecting.

Another strangely relatable moment, in which the distribution of labor feels gendered and

---

<sup>580</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>581</sup> Florence, "The Big," season 8, episode 1.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

lopsided is E2, S8, during the teamwork challenge featuring Team White: Braised in the South and The Southern Frenchie. Together, there are four men and two women (Donnie's wife, Meaghan and sous chef Amanda Ivy) on the teams. Brandon from Braised from the South describes the distribution of labor behind their "Southern Fried Chicken with crawfish grits, red onion marmalade and an arugula salad on top."<sup>583</sup> In the preparatory process, all predominantly creative roles are divided up among the four men on Team White: "So we divide up the tasks. Donnie is going to work on the fried chicken. I'm going to start cutting up andouille and veg. Steve is going to make the grits. Nick is going to work on his awesome onion marmalade."<sup>584</sup> Meaghan features in the task much later, only to take instructions from Donnie, about the utensils for serving dishes, and discuss in a small vignette why winning \$200 as part of the team challenge is so important for them. Despite the fact, that Team White won the team challenge, I am unsure and quite troubled to experience the absence of women, vis-à-vis, a sense of substantial contribution to the team. On the other hand, the distribution of labor on Team Red feels more egalitarian right off the bat. The leaders of both teams, Mikey and Shona are generally in charge of distributing the tasks, and it is endearing to hear Mikey refer to Shona as Mom.

Similarly, existing research affirms gender/class-based divides in the North food truck culture, in terms of immigrant or women-owned traditional taco trucks serving cheap food to more marginal populations, as opposed to gourmet food trucks' eclectic delicacies for a middle-class predominantly white clientele. *The Great Food Truck Race* either tends to mask this dominant narrative, downplay or equalize the class-based gustation territory. For example, Papi Chulo's Empanadas is quick to announce its Dominican (immigrant) heritage and a desire to help poor kids

---

<sup>583</sup> Florence, "New Marching," season 8, episode 2.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid.



in the Dominican Republic. Still, there are no clear class-based indicators, through which to ascertain, the kind of clientele this particular food truck desires to serve. As part of the beignet challenge, all food trucks sell their foods to the “beautiful people of the French quarters,” who seem to have cash on hand, to purchase the food. Eating the food trucks’ delicacies seems more like a matter of dispensable income, as opposed to sustenance.

Apropos of my research ethic of looking out for impasses, contradictions, and failures along with successful indictments of oppressive power structures, I do witness moments of resistance on the show. One of the show’s competitors, Mikey from the Breakfast Club, resists the scripted performance of masculinity through his non-conforming gender performance, which is way more expressive in his personal style of presentation and grooming (eg: visible lip gloss and make up), than the rest of the males in the show. His impromptu dance moves, for example, challenge the emotionally-contained tenor of most males on the show. For example, in E2, S8, in the context of the team challenge, he refers to Shona and himself in a manner which goes further to pronounce his non-conforming gender performance: “Shona is everyone’s mama now. She is the team mama, and I’m the team diva. So hand in hand, we work great together.”<sup>585</sup> As opposed to Donnie from the Southern Frenchie, who calls his co-collaborating, all male Braised from the South team, “composed,” Mikey proudly embraces his “diva-hood,” a word with largely feminine or campy inflections.<sup>586</sup> For example, in response to the stressful one hour food truck shutdown in E5, S8, during which time, only Braised in the South can sell their food, Mikey decides to get a relaxing “blowout” at a nearby hair salon.<sup>587</sup> At the end of his session, he claims to feel “totally

---

<sup>585</sup> Florence, “New Marching,” season 8, episode 2.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Florence, “Fresh Off,” season 8, episode 5.

refreshed and totally re-energized” for the remaining time of the competition, looks at his slick coiffure in the mirror and grimaces: “When in Georgia. Big hair? Don’t care.”<sup>588</sup>

While season eight showcases some defined gender and sexuality-bending moments, it steers clear from any references to queer identities in any manner. This is a surprising shift for the show’s tone in 2017, compared to its inaugural season in 2010, when right in the first episode, one of the teams Nom Nom (Vietnamese Banh Mi sandwiches) clearly identifies the gay community at one of San Diego’s largest farmers’ markets, as part of its desirable audience. Misa from Nom Nom notes in a reflective vignette, “It’s the perfect clientele, because it has a very large gay community, and we feel like the gay community is very open to, you know, new cuisine.”<sup>589</sup> As a critic, I find it inspiring that the inaugural season of the show in 2010, attempts to represent LGBTQIA minorities in its food landscape. The representational nod appears timely, particularly as a gesture of solidarity with the queer community of California, and against the same-sex discriminating, 2008 California proposition 8.<sup>590</sup> However, as I noted earlier, there are no references to the queer communities of the Southern States in season eight. I wonder if perceived political affiliations of Southern audiences, particularly in a divisive political climate in the US, under the leadership of Donald Trump, factored into making such queer omissions and declarations on the show over time. If so, I wonder, about the political cost of such omissions in a particularly fraught year like 2017. And, if so, I wonder if the show utilized stereotypical references to California’s queer community in 2010 (such as its receptivity to novelty), primarily to draw in

---

<sup>588</sup> Ibid.

<sup>589</sup> “The Great Food Truck Race S01E01,” The Great Food Truck Race, accessed March 2, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_InJ1Bq2Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_InJ1Bq2Rw)

<sup>590</sup> JoAnne Myers. *Historical Dictionary of the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movements: Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements Series* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 77. Accessed March 2, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.

greater foot traffic/higher viewership, from immediate audiences. Ultimately, no account of texts, contexts, audience, and judgment is complete without paying attention to the ethical issues raised in the rhetorical analysis of a media representation. The following section addresses some of the ethical issues I encountered in analyzing my media artifact.

## **ETHICS**

My observations under this section mirror my embodied judgments involved in evaluating inter-related dynamics of gender, power, race, sexuality, and identity in the show. However, here, my responsibility to the food-truck communities of *The Great Food Truck Race*, takes precedence over the scholarship that is produced from my analysis. It is more about community than argument. It is more about what my analysis reveals and hides in addressing questions of truth, power, relationships, and representations related to the communities. I already seem to have established para-social relationships with all the food truck competitors. I can feel the pull of that relationship, as I resume my analysis each day to co-participate in their life-affirming rhythms, tensions, challenges, victories, and defeats related to their culinary practices. However, I am constantly reflecting, if my analysis is able to do justice to the sort of representational data I am predominantly engaging: the immediacy of sensations and feelings. Am I reading reflecting on a perceived moment of gender inequality, because I really want to see it? Or am I also looking for redemptive spaces in which conformist molds are broken open, for something new to emerge?

Simultaneously, I am faced with a contradictory impulse, that challenges my idealism and naiveté. I forget that I am playing with a media artifact, whose food truck communities are also media representations. These representations carry purposefully crafted moments of narrated dramatization to draw in viewers. There is a shock value built in to the show and the performances

of the community, which I must remember, so that I can diffuse the sincere beliefs of my social-justice oriented criticism, with necessary artifice, craft, and the sophistry of reality television. Some of my research orientations are upended a little, because of an exaggerated moment, which transpires, among the food truckers of Stick ‘Em Up. Shona is excited about her memaw inspired red snapper cake recipe, while talking to her sons on the phone in E2, S8. Suddenly, she screams, and we witness retroactively, in slow motion, that she screamed, because she lost the recipe, scribbled out on paper, to a gust of wind. She rues over the fact, that the team will now have to “wing” memaw’s recipe. I cannot decide if the challenges of the moment are organic or manufactured to contribute to the adventurously urgent tone of the show. Perhaps, attending to my feelings of doubt at the moment is a sincere way to understand the *modus operandi* of the food truck community of the show. I find myself reflecting: I see what you did. I understand the context in which you function. As an audiencing and feeling rhetorical critic, I digest this encounter with a grain of salt: salt-to-taste, of course.

For rhetorical field scholars, an ethical orientation to research is a balance of power between the critic’s sovereignty and the community, which she or he attempts to investigate. In the context of closely reading my media artifact, I find myself balancing the scales of judgment in an odd fashion: I indict both the field and the critic (myself) with acts of injustice, so that the balance of power is in fact, an impasse between powerfulness and powerlessness. For example, I feel mildly irritated and amused with the food truck community, particularly with Braised in the South in E6, S8, when the team gushes about an opportunity to sell their gourmet tacos on a pedicab to the residents of Savannah:

Nick: This is Brandon’s bucket list right here. Like, Brandon is finally going to get to ride a pedicab, something he’s always wanted to do.

Brandon: “I’ve see pedicabs all around Charleston. You know, to get on there and be able to crank that thing around the city and be able to sell food—awesome.”<sup>591</sup>

The team’s excitement painfully triggers my South Asian class-consciousness, one which chafes slightly, every single time, an everyday problem is reduced, ever so gleefully, to first or third world solutions. Fetishizing the experience of riding a pedicab, and selling food on it on a hot day, for one hour, with a bonus “tan-line” is someone’s dream come true in a North American food truck context.<sup>592</sup> It is part of their bucket list! Yet, for an everyday South Asian food vendor, for whom tan is the always already brown, the list looks quite different. For such food vendors, selling their low-income food on slightly rusty rickshaws, in sticky sweltering Indian summers, torrid monsoons, or centrally-frigid winter environments, this is daily wage labor: what marginally keeps them, from kicking the bucket. I am aghast at the participants’ utter obliviousness of their socio-economic privilege vis-à-vis the rest of the world. I realize that part of the food truckers’ activity is scripted, and not necessarily their fault. Besides, in the North American context, with greater dispensable incomes and conditions of living, Brandon’s excitement is not completely off base. The team’s attitude irks my critical sensibilities, nonetheless. However, the buck does not stop at the pedicab driving food truckers alone. For each pedicab, there is a petty crab.

I am irritated with myself, too. And, I amuse myself, because I am complicit in perpetuating and reifying the show’s socio-economic privilege. This is why I am analyzing this particular artifact and not the everyday rhythms of South Asian food vendors and their completely underwhelming rickshaws. I also do not know if I can really speak for the South Asian food vending experience, just on the basis of racial similarity, when my class-experience in the US and

---

<sup>591</sup> Florence, “The Race,” season 8, episode 6.

<sup>592</sup> Florence, “The Race,” season 8, episode 6.

India does not fully embody the sort of labor, I end up fetishizing in my own writing. It feels so self-righteously effortless to denounce the entitled make-up of the show. My doctoral training has equipped me with all the biting jargon. I can produce clever theoretical turns of phrases, with which to dismantle power structures: my hybridity ensures that I see to it. This is an all-too familiar everyday experience of critical writing on my portable laptop, during which I taste the sweet joys of a global neoliberal enterprise, in the last dregs of my “restful blend tea,” in a conveniently located neighborhood coffee shop. Yet I feel powerless because I consume the same poison which I try to locate in socially-unjust rhythms of production here in North America and elsewhere in the world. In proclaiming this mea culpa, I am able to hold space for my disdainful feelings toward the food trucks and hypocritical feelings toward myself. The impasse is ethically at play again, and it balances out the power dynamic between the critic and the field as a simultaneous gesture of powerfulness and powerlessness. Finally, the sheer accomplishment of sustaining the critical and field-based balance of power in chapters three and four, calls forth the movement of the impasse into something more. The impasse is now at the cusp of its transformation into a unique queer alliance between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory which has been in its making and simultaneous undoing since the bodies interlocked in chapter three. The following chapter maps the contours of this new queer inter-disciplinary body of everyday experience through a dedicated discussion on the implications of quotidian rhetoric.

## Chapter 5: Implications of Quotidian Rhetoric

### THE IMPASSE WAS AN ARTFUL RHIZOME IN MAKING ALL THIS WHILE

“How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another? The orchid deterritorializes an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome...There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying. Rémy Chauvin expresses it well: “the *aparael evolution* of two beings that have absolutely nothing to do with each other”— Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 10

At the outset of this work, I had indicated my deep interest in everyday and ordinary encounters, which pervade the communicative interchanges among different kinds of bodies and ecologies. In the inaugural chapter, I proposed to call the study of such embodied communicative encounters or feeling-based refrains, which include extra-cognitive and extra-symbolic realm of bodily habits, daily routines, paces, and rhythms of interactions, everyday or *quotidian rhetoric*. At the time, I suggested why it was important to study mundane or commonplace accounts of rhetoric because it is a dynamic space where the unsung, embodied, and largely ignored communicative practices co-participate to produce, re-produce, disrupt, discard, and destroy the daily fabric of democracies. To reprise Pezzullo’s words, we contest and deliberate upon “public

values” amid rhetorical commonplaces.<sup>593</sup> The body is an immediate yet invisible medium in such ordinary “democratic imaginaries,” sadly invisible because of a disciplinary tendency to overemphasize the cognitive, at the expense of the embodied.<sup>594</sup> Therefore, to ground quotidian rhetoric in something embodied and material, I observed two live action clusters of Austin’s food truck scene, which provided the texts, contexts, and audiences for my embodied rhetorical judgment and ethical analyses. One cluster involved walking feet-first, along the four main directions of Austin’s food truck space. As part of the second cluster, I visited Austin’s food truck scene within the South by South West music, film, technology, and interactive media festival in March 2018. Just like the body, food is a deeply embedded and mundane aspect of everyday life. But, it is also a wonderful space of production and consumption, within which to witness the body’s sensory engagement with its immediate environment. Based on Austin’s food truck context, I have observed and evaluated participants’ communicative exchanges, based on their life-affirming rhythms, everyday affects, emotions, and ordinary habits of everyday experience, vis-à-vis food production and consumption. My observations in the field, have helped me extrapolate the importance of embodiment to democratic imaginaries of habits, pace of experience, everyday affects, and aesthetic experiences under the auspices of quotidian rhetoric.

The conceptual framework guiding the theory and fieldwork on quotidian rhetoric invited an encounter between the inter-disciplinary bodies of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory which I developed as an impasse throughout the length of this project. I called this interchange between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory an impasse, a temporary housing or a playful deadlock, because of their contrapuntal (of or pertaining to a counterpoint) orientations to embodiment and

---

<sup>593</sup> Pezzullo, “Afterword,” 184.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid.



materiality. Nonetheless, both fields encourage a return to the body as a sensory and ethical site for engaging with the environment: an alimentary resource for my work. Both approaches also utilize a formal treatment of experiences, with different end goals. To re-iterate for emphasis, form in its Deweyan iteration is the art of making clear: a persuasive factor in meaning making. Form is what makes an aesthetic experience possible: “We have, indeed, already mentioned these conditions of form in speaking of cumulation, tension, conservation, anticipation, and fulfillment as formal characteristics of an esthetic experience.”<sup>595</sup> For affect theory, and particularly Brinkema’s formal emphasis, affects have forms or patterns precisely because of their capacity for repetition whether it is a labored and flailing repetition for anxiety or joy’s repeated affirmation of all its possibilities including its own undoing. Affective forms are inchoately palpable prior to and alongside structural patterns, if not symbolically intelligible in producing a sense of consummated or fulfilling delightful perception, which Dewey attributes to aesthetic experiences.<sup>596</sup>

For Dewey, an aesthetic perception or what he also calls “esthetic [full] perception” involves “...a release of energy in its purest form; which, as we have also seen is one that is organized and so rhythmic.”<sup>597</sup> From the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, one can claim that affective forms tend to challenge a release of energy, which Massumi calls “West’s orgasmic orientation” (e.g., Dewey’s and Burke’s structuration of form: fulfillment or consummation, creation, and satisfaction of an appetite).<sup>598</sup> As opposed to aesthetic forms, affective forms repeat in a “libidinal economy,” whose goal is not culmination: “In Deleuze and Guattari, a plateau is reached when circumstances combine to bring an activity to a pitch of intensity that is not

---

<sup>595</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 150

<sup>596</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 19.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>598</sup> Brian Massumi, trans., *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1988), xiv.

automatically dissipated in a climax.”<sup>599</sup> And, there you have it: to release or not to release the energy, that is the impasse in question! The last four chapters, have contribute to the impasse, which has taken root at the tension of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory. That is the impasse, which has undulated and unfolded through the fields’ mutually frictional, somatic detours of stuckness and mobility, not toward a final destination, but actually as infoldments into each other. Theirs has been what Ahmed would consider the “drama of contingency,” which a terrific, terrifying, messy, and inconvenient contact of two bodies transpires in contact zones of proximity.<sup>600</sup> Therefore, I do not exaggerate when I declare that the impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory has been a common artful rhizome in making all this while: a queer world-making of two life-arts who have nothing to do with each other.

In the following sections of chapter five, I expound on what it means for the impasse to become an artful rhizome, drawing both from Dewey and Deleuze and Guattari to discuss notions of rhizomatic artfulness. Then, I delve into how and why this aesthetic-affective encounter, has implications for rhetorical scholars engaging with the American pragmatist tradition and theories of affect in their scholarship. I also connect the impasse-as-rhizome with my approach to fieldwork, which I have identified as *feet-first attitudes, orientations, and detours* to quotidian rhetoric. I discuss the connections among these seemingly loose threads, with an aim to contribute to rhetorical field methods, in terms of an embodied particularity. Finally, I gear my theoretical and field-based developments in quotidian rhetoric toward a general approach to food truck culture and food studies, which may benefit rhetoric and non-rhetoric scholars, who wish to study the

---

<sup>599</sup> Massumi, *A Thousand*, xiv.

<sup>600</sup> Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 124.

body in similar everyday environments.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE IMPASSE-AS-ARTFUL RHIZOME

What does it mean for the impasse between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory to proliferate into a common artful rhizome? What is artful and rhizomatic about the process? First, I will develop notions of artfulness from Dewey and demonstrate how the impasse embodies a sense of artfulness. The artful part of the impasse-as-artful rhizome is a performative gesture, with which I honor Dewey's unswerving respect for harmony, unity, and rhythmic organization in aesthetic experiences. I will follow up the discussion with a rhizomatic spin on the process, not emplacing but enunciating certain vital aspects of the rhizome, which I have not addressed in the previous sections. The rhizomatic part of the artful rhizome is a performative nod to Deleuze and Guattari's anti-genealogical, anti-hierarchical, profoundly queer, and contrarian thought. The discussion is oriented more toward honoring how the two are mostly the sources of their own undoing: repelling magnets in potentia. The competing and consonant tones of the two bodies contribute to an understanding of what this impasse-as-artful rhizome offers to rhetorical scholars of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory.

**Emplacing artfulness in the impasse-as-artful rhizome.** How does Dewey understand and explain artfulness in *Art as Experience*? What are some of the attributes, through which we can differentiate artfulness from non-artfulness? From the very outset in *Art as Experience*, Dewey combines a few terms, which he plays around through the entire length of his text. These are art, *esthetic*, and experience, embodiment, senses, engagement, and absorption. First of all, art is not removed, placed on some out of reach "far-off pedestal" or separate from lived experience.<sup>601</sup> In

---

<sup>601</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 4.

fact, art for Dewey is related to everyday and ordinary conditions of experience. Second, Dewey doesn't necessarily mention artfulness as a concept. Here, more contemporary rhetorical engagements with Dewey help transpose his theory of art, aesthetics, and everyday experience, into a working concept such as artfulness. For example, Stroud discusses the artfulness vis-à-vis the artful or aesthetic potential of everyday communication as primarily a "mental habit," or a person's orientation in relation with their means and ends of their activity.<sup>602</sup> A subjective orientation, which attends to the immediacy, "harmony and co-ordination" of a communicative practice is an artful habit of recognizing the ongoing connectedness of the present means with the aesthetic end.<sup>603</sup> Third, I engage the aforementioned Deweyan terms, to infer artfulness in four inter-related ways. Finally, I discuss the attributes of some orientations, attitudes, or habits, which Dewey may hesitate to call artful, and anesthetic.

First, artfulness is an *experiential orientation or mindful habit of embodied attention and absorption*, not toward/in art per se, but toward/in its "sources," and its raw materials, which are suffused with innumerable sensory stimuli.<sup>604</sup> Artfulness is this practiced combination of habit, attention, and absorption through which "our everyday enjoyment of scenes and situations develops into the peculiar satisfaction that attends the experience which is emphatically esthetic."<sup>605</sup> As an everyday orientation, artfulness interacts with art as lived experience (and vice-versa), to produce the emphatically delightful perception, or the rhythmic doing and undergoing of energy, which Dewey calls an aesthetic experience. The important point to re-iterate apropos of

---

<sup>602</sup> Scott R. Stroud, "John Dewey and the Question of Artful Communication," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 41 (2008): 155.

<sup>603</sup> Stroud, "John Dewey," 168.

<sup>604</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 3.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Dewey is that the habit of paying attention to the sensory means of lived experience, getting absorbed in their ordinariness makes the aesthetic end meaningful or wholesome. I would consider Dewey's treatment of means as not mere means but as an ethical approach to living because the immediacy of the means is felt, integrated, and made conscious in one's experience. The means are not just a meaningless aside or by-the-way media to devour the aesthetic end through ruthless fetishization and mindless consumption.

In fact, a second way to understand artfulness is through the mindful and ethical practice of not compromising the means to attain a desired outcome, something Dewey discusses in reference to play. Artfulness entails a *playful attitude*, which abounds in paradoxes, in true Deweyan fashion. One embodies a playful attitude in the doing and undergoing of something artful when: "Play remains as an attitude of freedom from subordination to an end imposed by external necessity; as opposed that is to labor; but it is transformed into work in that activity is subordinated to *production* of an objective result."<sup>606</sup> To clarify, artfulness entails a playful and ethical attitude, which freely absorbs the immediacy of the means, and does not let the aesthetic end dominate the moment of free-play. In that sense, artfulness remains a playful attitude without becoming tedious like labor. Paradoxically, artfulness as a playful attitude requires that the means of free-play "serve the purpose of a developing experience," such that the aesthetic end is produced as a *work* of ongoing and transformative processes which ensure the "complete merging of playfulness and seriousness."<sup>607</sup> Artfulness then is an immersive and imaginative orientation of working at the tensions of serious play.

Third, artfulness is an *interactive tendency of experience*, which connotes the experiential

---

<sup>606</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 291.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

quality of activity, in relation with an immediate environment. As Dewey writes, artful “tendencies of experience” do not subscribe to dichotomous mathematical limits, but come alive in bands or spectrums.<sup>608</sup> In relation, Dewey encourages one to develop artfulness as the *peculiar tendency of integrating experience*, through which one learns not to separate vital experiences into their intellectual, practical, and emotional components. The rhythmic organization of an artful doing and undergoing with respect to an experience in an environment renders the experience aesthetic.

Fourth, in Dewey’s writings, an artful orientation toward the raw materials of experience, requires that one habituate their interchanges with an immediate environment to practice what can only be a *contrasting, dynamic, and rhythmic union of polarities*: “Contrast of lack and fullness, of struggle and achievement, of adjustment after consummated irregularity, form the drama in which action, feeling, and meaning are one. The outcome is balance and counterbalance. These are not static nor mechanical.”<sup>609</sup> According to Dewey, this rhythmic structure, which is built into “the biological commonplaces” of bodies and ecologies, makes possible artful or aesthetic perceptions of lived experience: “Because the actual world, in which we live is a combination of movement and culmination, of breaks and re-unions, the experience of a living creature is capable of esthetic quality.”<sup>610</sup> From a Deweyan sense, the everyday enjoyment of scenes and events as aesthetic experiences of heightened vitality is predicated on their apprehension and attunement to, as contrasting but complementary union of polarities, whether they entail the productive tension between means and ends, or work and play.

Experiential orientations, which do not subscribe to the interconnected and complementary

---

<sup>608</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>609</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 15.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid., 13-16.

unity of everyday rhythms, will not translate into artfulness and by extension, an aesthetic experience, from a Deweyan stance: “There are two sorts of possible worlds in which esthetic experience would not occur. In a world of mere flux, change would not be cumulative; it would not move toward a close. Stability and rest would have no being. Equally is it true, however, that a world that is finished, ended, would have no traits of suspense and crisis, and, would offer no opportunity for resolution.”<sup>611</sup> Once again, Dewey demonstrates his experiential propensity for aesthetic balance which entails a progressive cumulation of energy, consummation, and a rhythmic integration of polarities. These are the dynamically consistent qualities that pervade his views on art, aesthetic experiences, and artfulness.

**The artfulness of the impasse-as-artful rhizome.** The preceding section helped me draw out notions of playfulness from Dewey and emplace them in the impasse-as-artful rhizome. Now, I draw on the previous section to demonstrate how the rhizomatic encounter between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory embodies a Deweyan sense of artfulness. From a Deweyan stance, this inter-disciplinary encounter is precisely the aesthetic or artful purpose of communication which makes civilization, or what he considers “instruction in the arts of life,” possible.<sup>612</sup> While Dewey’s theory of aesthetics and affect theory are not necessarily works of art proper, I still consider them artful orientations, which may be appreciated as civil instructions about ordinary, emplaced, and embodied attributes of quotidian experiences. Furthermore, both fields make instruction in the arts of life possible, because they value lived or organic experience. In this sense, their common rhizome embodies a sense of artfulness, as it shows an experiential orientation of attending to and absorbing the sentient sources of everyday scenes, affects, stimuli and such.

---

<sup>611</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 15.

<sup>612</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 350.

From a Deweyan point of view, the inter-disciplinary impasse has been more than just about “conveying information” about the fields themselves.<sup>613</sup> If anything, in writing up this impasse, I have understood and demonstrated how each field has infolded into each other’s structure, because they have absorbed each other’s sensory apparatuses in the interplay, and become civilized to their mutual presence as arts of life. The impasse then is more about both fields, contributing to an interactive tendency of experience, which entails “the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to share in the arts of living.”<sup>614</sup> The aesthetic and affective dimensions of the common rhizome, are its most intimate, energetic, and artful means of understanding the interactive tendencies of embodied experiences in quotidian rhetoric. Interaction is not just a material feature of a common artful rhizome. Interactive tendencies of lived experiences expand in their artful scope when imagination is at play. And, whether, it is by means of Deweyan or Deleuzian life-affirming rhythms, all this while, the impasse has definitely embodied a playful attitude because it has been “a matter of communication and participation in values of life by means of the imagination.”<sup>615</sup> Imagination is a serious investment in this common artful rhizome. In Dewey’s writing, imagination is strongly related to aesthetic perception, play, and artfulness:

[Imagination] designates a quality that animates and pervades all processes of making and observing. It is a way of seeing and feeling things as they compose an integral whole. It is the large and generous blending of interests at the point where the mind comes in contact with the world. When old and familiar things are made new in experience, there is imagination.

For example, both fields on their own embody an imaginative sense of artful play, as they go about

---

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

<sup>614</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 350.

<sup>615</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 350.



communicating and participating in the values of life. Let us re-trace our steps to Dewey's notes on a playful attitude. Such an attitude requires imagination, which animates and pervades the means to make, observe, see, and feel the heightened immediacy of ordinary experience. A playful attitude works as a paradox, precisely because its means are not subordinate to a unified aesthetic end. At the same time, the sensate means serve the purpose of developing experiences in imagining an aesthetic integral whole, which unites seriousness and playfulness. Similarly, in a rhizome's subterranean ethos of play, imagination animates and pervades all process of making and observing: "The multiple *must be made*, not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather in the simplest of ways, by dint of sobriety, with the number of dimensions one already has available –always  $n-1$  (the only way one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted)."<sup>616</sup> Rhizomatic multiplicities must be made as "varieties of measurement" in defiance of the One which works on "units of measure."<sup>617</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari, making, observing, seeing, and feeling the multiple, are imaginative counterpoints to Dewey and against any kind of linear wholes. When we subtract linear unity (1) from  $n$ , we get what is already available under the ground: a rhizome with multiple roots. Despite a drastic difference in their individual orientations toward imagination, both fields still embody artfulness in their encounter. This is because their inter-disciplinary interlocking imagination is the large and generous blending of aesthetic and affective interests, at the artful point where the minds of two bodies of knowledge (and vice-versa) communicate with the world. Furthermore, imagination is definitely heightened in the case of experiencing an art from elsewhere, especially in the way Dewey puts it:

Nevertheless, when the art of another culture enters into attitudes that determine our experience genuine continuity is effected. Our own experience does not thereby lose its

---

<sup>616</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 6.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

individuality but it takes unto itself and weds elements that expand its significance. A community and continuity that do not exist physically are created....Only an expansion of experience that absorbs into itself the values experienced because of life-attitudes, other than those resulting from our own human environment, dissolves the effect of discontinuity.<sup>618</sup>

The fraught but civil communication between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory has indeed felt like an inter-cultural meeting of two life-arts. Between them, it has been a meeting of imaginative attitudes that link up obliquely to queer a sense of disciplinary identity, but not replace it. There is a creative sense of expansion in this aesthetic-affective encounter that involves a mutual absorption of several thinkers' life-attitudes, a hosting of amity, community, and disruptive continuity which did not exist physically. When the old and familiar American pragmatist Dewey winds up in an impasse with a body of thought so strangely contrarian, so radically opposed, and yet so fitting in its imaginative range, something new is created: their common artful rhizome. When I understand and present the impasse as a common artful rhizome, I realize what Dewey means when he writes: "When the new is created, the far and strange become the most natural inevitable things in the world."<sup>619</sup> Of course, the enunciation of the rhizome in the impasse-as-artful rhizome would be the ruefully joyous undoing of everything I just wrote. But that is just the challenge I signed up for in daring to stage this rhizomatic encounter between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory.

---

<sup>618</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 349-350.

<sup>619</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 278.

**Enunciating the rhizome in the impasse-as-artful rhizome.** After all this while, it gives me heart to write that this impasse-as-rhizome “has no beginning or end, it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo.”<sup>620</sup> But what are we to do with this intermezzo rhizome of Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory? How can this encounter benefit scholars who are interested in the two fields? From a rhizomatic stance, the impasse has transformed the fields into an interlocking queer alliance whose purpose is not imitation, resemblance, clean resolution, dissipation, release, or a convenient collapse into unity. As such, I have been able to evince how two zones of embodiment come to celebrate their proximity through the alterity of their “desires and aims.”<sup>621</sup> The impasse-as-artful rhizome has been creeping on the fields’ mutual territories, growing on them, cajoling them into ceding individual ground, while landscaping each other through contradictions, failures, misrecognitions, love, loss, anger, and so much more. It has become not one or the other, but a third kind of heterogeneity, a new queer identity: “the rhizome, on the other hand, is a liberation of sexuality not only from reproduction but also from genitility... What is at question in a rhizome is a relation to sexuality—but also to the animal, the vegetal, the world, politics, the book, things natural and artificial—that is totally different from the arborescent relation: all manner of ‘becomings.’”<sup>622</sup> A liberated queer identity speaks to the *aparaallel evolution* through “transversal communications of heterogeneous populations” so far apart in time, space, and outlooks.<sup>623</sup> They never had anything to do with each other which is why everything in terms of becoming interlocked, connected, and caught up in one another as an artful rhizome in all manner of becomings. The *aparaallel evolution* is precisely the rhizomatic production, the “creative

---

<sup>620</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 25.

<sup>621</sup> Dewey, *Art*, 350.

<sup>622</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 18.

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

involution” of a new aesthetic-affective unconscious “between and beneath” the inter-cultural meeting of the two bodies.<sup>624</sup> A new aesthetic-affective unconscious with its new queer identity becomes “communicative or contagious” in the dissolution of old aesthetic-affective forms, liberation of “times and speeds,” and the issuance of “new statements, different desires.”<sup>625</sup> Of course, it is not a perfect fit between the two, which is why from a rhizomatic point of view, the impasse works as an artful rhizome.

For example, Dewey cherishes the conscious delightful aesthetic perception of art as lived experiences, as an achievement of human contribution, something that differentiates human economies from bestial and vegetal ecologies. Affect theory and particularly Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic refrain are particularly critical of this humanist tendency in thinkers like Dewey. For them, all living, non-living, organic, inorganic, or machinic forms are capable of forming rhizomatic multiplicities with each other (e.g., “the wind, an animal, human beings”).<sup>626</sup> But, that is exactly the rhizomatic process of reterritorialization and deterritorialization at its artful play within the impasse: “Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is a part of the rhizome. The lines always tie back to one another.”<sup>627</sup> Deweyan aesthetics try to stratify, territorialize, organize, signify, and attribute a rhythmic systematicity to aesthetic experiences. However, there is already a deterritorializing force built into the impasse, because of affect theory, which constantly opposes and flees any such

---

<sup>624</sup> Ibid., 238-239.

<sup>625</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 18-267.

<sup>626</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 11.

<sup>627</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 9.

attempts entailing reterritorialization. But, that's exactly how this rhizome's inter-disciplinary queer territory can grow: through spontaneous deterritorialization.<sup>628</sup> Dewey would offer that in an aesthetic experience, there is a union of contrasting polarities, a consummation of action, meaning, and feeling as one. At that very moment, the deterritorializing force of the rhizome would challenge the notion of the One, by forming a multiplicity which "ceases to have any relation to the One as subject or object, natural or spiritual reality, image, and world."<sup>629</sup> Despite the artful fights and rhizomatic flights, both fields are a part of a common rhizome, whose repelling actions magnetize the two back to one another, and invite a discussion on the rhetorical future of Deweyan aesthetics and affect.

#### **WHITHER THE IMPASSE-AS-ARTFUL RHIZOME: IMPLICATIONS FOR RHETORICAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH PRAGMATISM AND AFFECT**

The impasse-as-artful rhizome communicates some important implications about future rhetorical works that engage pragmatist aesthetics and affect theory. First, for a richer investigation of the body in everyday experiences, rhetorical scholars need to take both aesthetics and affect into their critical account. If in the past the broad category of Western aesthetics has had the notorious reputation for being totalizing, exclusive, or unwelcome to anything other than notions of "meaning, autonomy, beauty" or taste, it is time to remedy that insularity with a rhizomatic artfulness.<sup>630</sup> Basically, Kelly re-affirms the productive tensions between Deweyan aesthetics and affect, which I have articulated throughout this work. He observes that even when critical theorists denounce aesthetic concepts, which reify notions of beauty or autonomy, their critiques re-direct

---

<sup>628</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 11.

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>630</sup> Michael Kelly. *A Hunger for Aesthetics: Enacting the Demands of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 2.

attention to a desire for expansive aesthetic categories like “the sublime, the abject, the uncanny, and the like,” or what he calls “regenerated” or “recalibrated aesthetics.”<sup>631</sup> If Dewey’s uptake in the field of rhetoric and communication has declined since the 1950s, it does not mean that his work is not meaningful anymore. It may simply mean that rhetorical scholars need to recalibrate the ethical and political commitments of projects which engage Deweyan aesthetics. My work on quotidian rhetoric is one such ethical and political attempt at testing out a new alliance between Deweyan aesthetics and affect.

Second, we need to ask, what we miss out in learning from the humanistic arrogance of the current political epoch if an aesthetic experience is still articulated as a delightful achievement of human perception, democratic communication, and participation. For instance, it seems hypocritical to utilize bestial metaphors (e.g., “lone wolf” vis-à-vis “Austin’s serial bomber Mark Anthony Conditt”) to castigate everyday forms of violence in the U.S.<sup>632</sup> The hypocrisy is especially laughable, when well-adjusted human speech heads, maim bodies and ecologies through weapons loaded with hate speech, bigotry, and incivility: artfully like lone humans, unlike animal rhizomes (becoming-wolves in packs and multiplicities).<sup>633</sup> To the uncharitable reader, yes, I agree that it is humans who will (or will not) read this consciously crafted argument. I am not arguing that we start talking about the rhetoric of wolves or couchgrass or potatoes (more power to those who can and do). However, those interested in scholarship related to everyday rhetoric might at least be attentive to bestial and vegetal modes of communication (e.g., a lupine sense of loyalty or howling) which exert their own rhetoricity on an everyday and ordinary aesthetic-affective

---

<sup>631</sup> Kelly, *A Hunger*, 2.

<sup>632</sup> Deepti Hajela, “Sympathy for White Austin Bomber Stirs Debate about Race,” PBS News Hour, accessed March 27, 2018, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/sympathy-for-white-austin-bomber-stirs-debate-about-race>

<sup>633</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 28-29.

assembly we call democracy. If embodied absorption is indeed key to an aesthetic experience, then perhaps the best way to get to that end is to forget about it and take a mindful detour toward vegetal and bestial bodies in relation with the human. In other words, if we re-direct attention to the object of experience and find ways to decenter the human subject of aesthetic perception, what new aesthetic and affective assemblies might such democratic infrastructures support? We might attend more graciously to such non-human and extra-human objects of experience to become like Cixous writes: “better human. This means, while being human, not depriving oneself of the rest of the universe.”<sup>634</sup> In doing so, we need not co-opt the alertness of a live animal, or the rhizomatic burrowing of rats, to make the same old case about how humans do it better as delightful perceptions of the everyday. Instead, we might embody the ethical relation of growth, disrepair, and death we share with such sentient bodies and ecologies in lived scholarship related to everyday rhetoric.

Likewise, if aesthetics, as Kelly argues, makes art efficacious and “intelligible,” might an aesthetic delightful perception become more politically intelligible, were it to be ethically re-oriented to include unappetizing feelings of disgust?<sup>635</sup> Might the labored repetitions of anxiety (which will just not consummate), efficaciously replenish the everyday roots of the aesthetic? Or might the sort of joy, which can only affirm itself as delight, if the body is hospital to everything that crushes the last vestige of delight, every single time, re-calibrate the aesthetic scale of civil instruction in the arts of life? My work on quotidian rhetoric, entailing the impasse-as-artful rhizome between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory is as much an answer as a speculative orientation toward their productive future of failures, contradictions, misrecognitions, successes,

---

<sup>634</sup> Cixous and Calle-Gruber, Hélène Cixous, *Rootprints*, 32.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

and even more impasses.

Third, as I have discussed in several chapters, Dewey's work on aesthetics, offers an invigorating and body-positive account of the everyday. But it needs a non-normative alliance (e.g., with affect) to address the racial, gendered, sexual, political, and ethical desires of the democratic imaginaries and the sentient multiplicity of bodies and ecologies, wrestling with public values on a daily basis. Rhetorical scholars need to stage transversal communications between aesthetics and affect (or other bodies which value everyday experience) to expand notions of body-positivity and include its negative limits, for more capacious forms of experiences, contributing to a reconstruction of Deweyan aesthetics itself. In other words, rhetorical scholars need to engage theories of affect more welcomingly so that Dewey's work on aesthetics can appeal to more diverse affects, transnational audiences, and everyday rhetoric scholars. The impasse-as-artful rhizome foregrounds bodily comportments, dispensations, feelings both dirty and clean, in its academic and practicable foci. Affect theory challenges the general and fundamental orientation of the academy (both humanities and the sciences) which has tended to value reason and rationale over emotion. Needless to say, by bringing the body back into the theoretical fold, affect theory also challenges masculinist notions of scholarship, mastery, and praxis because of the body's general association with women and other forms of servility and consequential denigration.<sup>636</sup> This disavowal of dichotomous experiences is a passionate project of the American pragmatists as well, particularly that of Deweyan aesthetics. The celebration of the body as an enfoldment of the outside without its enclosure in some sacred sanctum, accessible only to the elite few, opens up space for theorizing an ordinary and everyday ethics of becoming, of burgeoning as a force, a relation, a processual,

---

<sup>636</sup> Shusterman, *Thinking*, 37.



and open-ended intensity capable of change and transformation. Most of the affect theorists that I have discussed in this work share a commitment to somatic indeterminacy, because of which the impasse-as-artful rhizome can go anywhere including nowhere.

The fourth implication has to do with the problematic history of the body, in the field of communication. My work repairs a frayed thread in the field's bodily history by suggesting that we replace the twentieth century speech ideal of the *well-adjusted personality* with what I call a *wellness-attuned personality*. A wellness-attunement in everyday rhetoric and communicative practices is possible, if we turn to the combination of aesthetics and affect, to cater to diverse communicative needs of the current times. In re-tracing steps to the first chapter, we learnt that Dewey's work on social adjustment and adaptation deeply influenced the discipline's uptake and practice of mental hygiene in speech classrooms in the early twentieth century. Mental hygiene connoted the notion of developing a well-adjusted personality through mentally healthy, correct, and socially-adaptive habits of speech. The hallmark of the well-adjusted personality was emotional stability and security, only possible when intellect was at the helm of speech making. This meant that in the time between 1915-1945, intellect and emotion became opposing entities with the latter coming to occupy an untrustworthy space in the field of communication. However, in the subsequent chapters, we also learned that for Dewey an aesthetic experience is not just an empty appreciation of art on far off pedestals.

Instead, aesthetic perception is a democratic way of engaging with life, fully meaningful when it entails an organism's absorbed (implying an intellectual, practical, and emotional unity) communication and embodied participation with its environment. The disciplinary irony is self-evident. The foundations of communication studies have stood on the disembodied edifice of the

well-adjusted personality, whose idea of socially adaptive communication is a mastery of the self and control of the audience through healthy habits of speech. If this is indeed the rueful history of our field, first of all, how is a well-adjusted personality aesthetically equipped to participate and communicate in a democracy which comes alive through an attention to the life-affirming rhythms of the body in relation with its environment? Second of all, what is so hygienic or healthy about disembodied habits of speech? If a well-adjusted personality lacks the affective vocabulary, with which to attune itself to an everyday pace of experience in relation with an environment, including different kinds of positive and negative affects, how is it ethically equipped to communicate and participate with other bodies inhabiting similar environments? This is why in the introductory chapters, I have suggested that the field of communication studies needs to recalibrate its practical pursuit of the well-adjusted personality to include what I consider a wellness-attuned personality.

A wellness-attuned personality is an ethical reparative to all those positive and negative feelings of the body, the ethical and everyday means, which have been silenced in the discipline's controlling and over-intellectualized endpoint of attaining a well-adjusted personality. This impasse-as-artful rhizome enables the aesthetic and affective reparation of the well-adjusted personality, so that the discipline's Deweyan inheritance may be meaningful and inclusive to rhetoric and communication scholars of the current and future generation. And, instead of telling students of public speaking to *fake it till they make it* as well-adjusted personalities, we can begin telling them to *face it whether or not they make it*, it being the life-affirming rhythms of joy, bliss, anxiety, distress, disgust, or excitement as in life, so in the classroom. Public speaking instructors can encourage students to develop wellness-attuned personalities, which pay ethical attention to the rhythms of the body in relation to other bodies and ecologies. Communication and participation

then become embodied means, not oriented toward aesthetic consummation or fulfillment, but toward the infoldment of disparate bodies connecting and proliferating rhythmically, in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. With a wellness-orientation, students can come to appreciate communication as the civil instruction in the immediacy of life, which contributes to aesthetic, artful, rhizomatic, and embodied ways of living in a democracy.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE IMPASSE-AS-ARTFUL RHIZOME FOR RHETORICAL FIELD METHODS**

In my work, I have approached my writing and fieldwork with a performative and embodied stance. Such a stance honors both the Deweyan ethic of artful absorption in the detours of the body en route to the aesthetic end, and the rhizomatic desire to deterritorialize the former's rhythmic organization and stratification of everyday experiences, be it research, writing, and/or fieldwork. Through these interlocking orientations, I have experienced the same uplifting, retarding, stuck, and fluid life-affirming rhythms of joy, fear, bliss, enthusiasm, courage, exhaustion, anxiety, disgust, distress, panic, frustration, and discouragement. In addition to my theoretical framework, when it comes to the ethics of embodied writing, I am beholden (time after time) to the inspiring work of Cixous, who champions the aesthetic-affective rhythmic tension in her politically-poetic philosophy of writing with the body:<sup>637</sup> "But what remains of music in writing, and which exists also in music properly speaking is indeed the rhythm, it is indeed the scansion which also does its work on the body of the reader."<sup>638</sup> The musically-attuned practice of writing with the body is Cixous's attempt at drawing intimate connections between everyday language, the female body, and the disciplinary power of language in upholding masculinist

---

<sup>637</sup> Cixous et al., "Laugh," 879-882.

<sup>638</sup> Cixous and Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, Rootprints*, 64.

libidinal economies of expression.<sup>639</sup> Moreover, the practice is her performative and feminist call to women and men alike to inject the multiple desires, rhythms, affects, and sensations of the body in relation with other bodies and ecologies, into writing. She especially calls women to write for themselves with their bodies to re-populate their desires in their “immense bodily territories,” and not the patriarchy-sanctioned confiscations of the female form, one experiences in several trans-cultural milieus: “Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time.”<sup>640</sup> When scholars research, write and do fieldwork with their bodies, they start noticing their own modes of self-censorship, which value certain experiential frames, and silence shame, and inhibit other bodily dispensations. Brinkema expressly draws attention to “the long-standing hierarchy of senses in Western philosophy that elevates critical faculties above the material corpus, and that privileges senses associated with judging, reasoning, perceiving faculties (sight, sound, and occasionally touch) over those aligned with reproduction, death, decay, survival, and the bestial (smell, taste, and occasionally touch).”<sup>641</sup> Therefore, when we start tuning in to our bodies, we start paying attention to the hierarchical politics of the senses, especially in an academic context. Can we indeed write with our ears, as Cixous urges, ears which are attuned to the musicality of the body in a rhythmic interchange with language?<sup>642</sup> Or would we get disciplined for such creative practices? Might it not be safer to keep the sensory matching intact, just so we are not called out either by reviewers, evaluators, or anyone else with disciplining powers? Whether or not one has earned their position in the field to take chances in writing, a detour of attention to hierarchical politics of

---

<sup>639</sup> Jaishikha Nautiyal, “Writing the Desire that Fire Bore: Emergent Motherhood in Hélène Cixous’s *The Book of Promethea*,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 39 no. 4 (2016): 396.

<sup>640</sup> Cixous et al., “Laugh,” 880.

<sup>641</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 120.

<sup>642</sup> Cixous and Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, Rootprints*, 64.

the senses is just the wake-up call one needs, to understand the importance of embodiment as an ethico-political practice.

Moreover, in heteropatriarchal masculinist economies, linguistic violence, erasure, and censorship (self or otherwise) mostly takes place over the female body. The erasure of the female body is generally associated with her bodily excesses, “senses linked to the appetitive and the excessive,” related icky affects and emotions, something I have asserted repeatedly in the misogynistic disciplinary history of rhetoric and communication.<sup>643</sup> This is why, when it comes to the performative ethics of writing with the body in this work, I take a detour to my own past intertwined with Cixous’s daring counsel, so that I can remember, why returning to the body matters time and again: “Cixous’s politics of poetics reflects her lifelong commitment to writing with an “I” that inhabits a fluid body in an open subject. The “I” that writes with its body is able to challenge how writing against the grammatical grain is an affirmative act of resisting language’s unconscious hold on the psyche. For the author that is serious.”<sup>644</sup> Playfully experiencing and seriously embodying what one is trying to articulate in theory is an ethical gesture of a feeling rhetorical critic (me), in which case, the “I,” which feels is closer to the “I,” which writes with the body, as opposed to the violently removed “I,” which observes the field objectively: cold, composed, and unaffected.<sup>645</sup> Since the feeling “I” checks in with the body’s affective states more regularly or at least tries to be emotionally aware, I argue that it is closer to the embodied multiplicities in one’s writing voice, which welcomes a fluid body, open subject position, and performative resistance to unconscious linguistic violence.

---

<sup>643</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 121.

<sup>644</sup> Nautiyal, “Writing,” 396.

<sup>645</sup> Landau, “Feeling,” 10.

At the same time, the feeling “I” is akin to how Wyatt et al. might approach an ethic of reading and writing with an “unprepared” “I,”<sup>646</sup> The I as Wyatt et al. note is “unprepared for the confusion and the lure of words, for the slippage of those words, for slipping and falling into language, for losing oneself, losing the “I”—becoming imperceptible”<sup>647</sup> This unprepared I is unprepared to becoming imperceptible in reason because it is prepared to feel. It is antithetical to mastery but instead rejoices in the “misstery, a mystery of language,” the excess, the *jouissance* of bodily uncertainties, their arrhythmic rhythms, extra-cognitive voices of playful disruption, uneasy laughter, lines of flights of fancy, or the unbearable lightness in loving the unknowability of the Other.<sup>648</sup> At this juncture, I may be indicted for potentially re-inforcing the intellect and emotion binary by siding with the latter through embodied practices in writing. However, akin to the work of the scholars I have just discussed, I am only suggesting that it is impossible and unethical to dismiss the critic’s bodily engagement with the life-affirming rhythms of fieldwork and writing. In a similar spirit, I extend Cixous’s and Wyatt et al.’s ethical practices of writing and reading, to propose an unprepared feeling I, which navigates writing, research, and fieldwork through artful and rhizomatic detours taken with a feet-first attitude.

As I have discussed in chapter three, my fieldwork on Austin’s food truck scene draws on *in situ* and participatory approaches within rhetorical field methods, approaches which are encouraging and sympathetic of performative writing. For instance, the embodied vulnerability of feeling the sentient refrains of the unprepared feeling “I”, shifts the agency of the sovereign critical

---

<sup>646</sup> Jonathan Wyatt, Ken Gale, Susanne Gannon, Bronwyn Davies, Norman K. Denzin, and Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, “Deleuze and Collaborative Writing: Responding to/With “JKSB”,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 14, no. 4 (2014): 415.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.

<sup>648</sup> Kelly Ives, *Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva: The Jouissance of French Feminism* (Kent: Crescent Moon Publishing 2013), 76.

I, which runs the risk of acting as a well-adjusted speech-head in total control.<sup>649</sup> A performative stance in writing and a participatory approach to fieldwork is my humble and flawed attempt to practice what I have called wellness-attunement, an aesthetic and affective detour to make an artful rhizome with sentient bodies and ecologies. A performative stance strives for a balance of power among the self-as-critic (me), the self as just another ordinary person observing the field, the theoretical frameworks, and the communities which I investigate. Deleuze and Guattari would consider this non-sovereign shift and displacement, the perpetual becoming of a fluid, unprepared feeling “I,” one that produces nothing but itself because it “lacks a subject distinct from itself.”<sup>650</sup> This becoming I does not resemble, imitate, progress to, regress from, or identify with a transcendental unity but is within itself, *in situ* yet becomes only in relation to multiplicitous desires of other becoming Is. The becoming I is creative and rhizomatic, an “*an-nomalie*”: “unequal, the coarse, the rough, the cutting edge of deterritorialization,” of linear and rationalist language.<sup>651</sup>

The becoming I is the embodiment of anomalous sorcery, “a power of alliance inspiring illicit unions or abominable ones,” powerful queer alliance between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory, which I have attempted to articulate through the aparallel evolution of their impasse-as-artful rhizome.<sup>652</sup> My fieldwork generates an intermezzo account of sustaining the body at the conjunctural tension of everyday and ordinary practices of rhetoric. Thus, the rhizomatic encounter between Deweyan aesthetics and affect theory renders malleable, the notion of representational re-invention, which scholars of rhetorical field methods have also supported through their attention

---

<sup>649</sup> McHendry, “Thank You,” 555; McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 15-17.

<sup>650</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand*, 238.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

to embodied, emplaced, and intangible traces of the everyday. My work extends many current endeavors within rhetorical field methods, especially those which have foregrounded the vitality of the body *in situ*. The impasse-as-artful rhizome is a potential contribution to rhetorical field methods, in terms of the embodied specificity I bring to my fieldwork. The follow section accounts for the contribution along with its limitations, as I re-trace my steps to embodying a feet-first attitude in the field as a *detour de force*.

**Embodied particularity in fieldwork.** In chapter three, I offered a detailed account of how the current scholarship in rhetorical field methods is an incredible resource for scholars interested in the mundane richness of everyday rhetoric. Rhetorical field scholars offer fascinating ethical approaches and embodied modes of judgment, to examine everyday rhetorical texts, contexts, and audiences, which are generally bypassed in the lure of that great televised debate, or that famous cultural object. Yet, while most of such scholarship repeatedly discusses the rhetorical value of incorporating emplaced, immediate, affective, aesthetic, performative, movement-related, phronetic, audiencing, or feeling-based modes of embodiment, I sense a lack of embodied specificity in most of the accounts.<sup>653</sup> Light offers a form of visual specificity through her conceptualization of the surveilling “eye/I,” a security-conscious subjective awareness, which the 9/11 memorial in New York City constitutes in its visitors.<sup>654</sup> Again, most other rhetorical field scholars point to a more general approach to embodiment: attention to feeling, self-reflexivity, sensations, etc. So I ask myself: what does it mean to embody scholarship? Is there a way to particularize the ethics of embodiment in writing with the body, for instance? And if so, would the

---

<sup>653</sup> Endres et al., 511-516; Haliliuc, “Being,” 134; Hess, “Embodied,” 90; Light, “Visualizing,” 538-40; McHendry, “Thank You,” 555; McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 4; Senda-Cook et al., “Interrogating,” 32.

<sup>654</sup> Light, “Visualizing,” 538-40.



account of an embodied particularity in rhetorical field methods be helpful in assisting certain kinds of fieldwork? I realize I contradict my own writing in wanting to compartmentalize the body (yet again) in suggesting the need for embodied specificity in rhetorical field methods, at least for some kinds of projects. I also realize my habitual smugness in asking the questions to which I think I have answers. However, to be charitable to my suggestion in the spirit of field-based enrichment, I wish to offer an embodied particularity, merely as another specific access point to rhetorical field methods, not to foreclose existing scholars' productive modes of embodiment. The following pith from Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* sets the pace of the next detour:

### **Writing with One's Foot**

I do not write with hand alone  
My foot does writing of its own.  
Firm, free, and bold my feet engage  
In running over field and page.<sup>655</sup>

Nietzsche's intrepid call to writing with firm, free, and bold feet engaging field and page, re-affirms my feet-first attitude and orientation toward fieldwork, as first and foremost, the dancing of an embodied ethic. An economical, ethical, and healthy access point to scholars of everyday rhetoric, I offer this artful and rhizomatic stance to rhetorical field methods, as an embodied particularity. Once again, I agree that there is definitely an ableist privilege built into my proposition, which makes it inaccessible to those, who do not respond to movement with the privilege of walking as I do. So, I offer this attitude as a generous and nomadic orientation of mobility attuned to differences. This is the reason, why I also draw my embodied particularity as an *ethic of creeping persistence* from the vegetal ethic of plants and rhizomes. One of the injustices of Western metaphysics is to ascribe a generally "passive [and thus inferior] comportment" to the

---

<sup>655</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 21.

vegetal life, on account of its stationary emplacement in the earth, compared to the active human capacity of ambulation.<sup>656</sup> Yet, rhizomes of plants (tubers, couchgrass) and animals (wolf packs) alike proliferate and connect in multiple directions. Radically passive and open to the threats of the earth, they creep closely along their vulnerabilities, connect again from where a rupturing detour takes them, and communicate in multiplicities.<sup>657</sup> Similarly, what I articulated in the preamble to my fieldwork orientation, I affirm here once again. May one only amble feet-first as in the field, so in everyday life, when they have infolded the rhizomatic orientation toward non-linear movement, lateral growth, and the multiplicitous desire to map with the world in detours and ruptures (vice-versa). May one only amble feet-first, when they have infolded an unprepared feeling “I,” broken and becoming by ruptures, to write with the body “by violent fragments, by splinters.”<sup>658</sup>

One navigates a field with the directional help of maps, compasses, and the latest GPS technologies. For my fieldwork and writing practice, I amble feet-first for habitual navigation in familiar places, taking detours in new spaces, grounding in heavy moments of stuckness, and meditative reflection.<sup>659</sup> But, a feet-first attitude is not all helpful all the time, because the physical limits of my body, its frailty, its weaknesses are simply built into the structure. As much as I dream, I cannot walk the ends of the earth for fieldwork, if it is indeed the other end of the world, whose food truck culture I wish to investigate. I will need to engage other modes of transportation, feet-first, if I wish to walk feet-first and examine a cultural practice in Copenhagen, New Delhi, or

---

<sup>656</sup> Marder, *Plant-Thinking*, 69.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

<sup>658</sup> Cixous and Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, Rootprints*, 30.

<sup>659</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh. *Peace of Mind: Becoming Fully Present* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2013), 150.

Portland for that matter. Plus for all the romanticized bravado I have attributed to the dizzying disorientations of detours, I confess that a feet-first attitude tests patience like nothing else does. I also confess that while participant observation is helpful in generating rich accounts of ordinary lived experiences on the ground and robust enough to operationalize my theoretical impasse, it lacks the informational specificity that I might get from ethnographic interviews. Perhaps a future direction for my work would entail a more direct engagement with food truck producers and consumers to ascertain the aesthetic and affective pulses of everyday rhetoric in food spaces. However, just as Cixous makes a visionary play out of her shortcomings, for instance, her “nearsightedness,” to heighten the element of attention in her embodied ethic of writing, I attempt to model the same element in my feet-first attitude: “Microscopes, telescopes, myopias, magnifying glasses. All this apparatus is us: attention. To think, I knit my brows, I close my eyes, and I look.”<sup>660</sup> To that end, I inherit Dewey’s, Deleuze and Guattari’s, Nietzsche’s, and Cixous’s apparatus as inspired detours of attention, open my eyes, and walk feet-first.

At the same time, no one wishes for failures in their varied professional or personal pursuits, no matter how many detours of attention they take, no matter how unprepared, ruptured, or splintered their body-mind. In fact, proving that one is a tour de force, an emblem of excellence is what drives different people across different professions and disciplines. However, based on all the contrarian thinkers, who feature in my work, and help me challenge any settled rhythms of feeling, thinking, and being, whether it is temporal, spatial, navigational, and/or directional orientations, I suggest that rhetorical field scholars try becoming a *detour de force* in the field. This is not anti-narcissism, where despite all my claims of embracing the stuckness, contradiction,

---

<sup>660</sup> Cixous and Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, Rootprints*, 3-4.

and potential failure of a detour, I am still libidinally invested in its banal novelty. I think becoming a detour de force in the field is my attempt at representational re-invention from an underdog's point of view, "forgotten corners of the chassis, the corporeal Third World, and its subaltern abjects" (apropos of Brinkema).<sup>661</sup> Underdogs are the fools who get laughed at for their unconventional ideas, who struggle to fit in, not because they are special (even if they are flawed in wanting to believe so—then again, who does not?). Underdogs struggle because they try looking at the earth from "point of view of the moon," as Cixous would encourage one, in the spirit of challenging "geocentric" thinking: "It's a game, but a serious one. It is a way of dehierarchizing – everything. Being geocentric, because we are geocentric, we say: from the earth to. And the moon is the other... Let us change points of view... The earth seen from the point of view of the moon is revived: it is unknown, to be rediscovered."<sup>662</sup> Becoming a detour de force is a representational re-invention of directionality through geocentric dehierarchizing, of changing egocentric perspectives-by-lunacy. By becoming a detour de force, the field can be rediscovered artfully and rhizomatically (as I have hopefully demonstrated in chapters three and four), with the help of means, which are antithetical to common navigational practices. And, now that I have re-articulated some major implications and minor limitations of my embodied particularity in rhetorical field methods, it is time to set foot in the final section of this chapter. The following section offers fruitful implications for the general connection between everyday rhetoric and food truck culture, which I have been able to draw from my theoretical impasse, fieldwork in Austin's food truck scene, and rhetorical analysis of my media artifact, *The Great Food Truck Race* in chapter four.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF IMPASSE-AS-ARTFUL-RHIZOME FOR RHETORICAL STUDIES**

---

<sup>661</sup> Brinkema, *The Forms*, 121.

<sup>662</sup> Cixous and Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, Rootprints*, 10.

## ON FOOD TRUCK CULTURE

With the help of my work, I offer a new everyday rhetorical space, which features the dynamic communicative interchanges among bodies and ecologies, with food as their aesthetically and affectively emplaced medium. Particularly, I have focused on the extra-cognitive refrains embedded in such communicative interchanges, which draw scholarly attention to the body, its everyday habits, affects/emotions, and pace of experience in relation with an environment. My fieldwork on Austin's food truck space, including the annual South-by-South-West (SXSW) music, film, and, interactive media, and technology festival (March 2018), along with a rhetorical analysis of the reality food truck competition *The Great Food Truck Race*, provide the evidence base for my argument about the extra-cognitive aspects of everyday rhetoric. As I have articulated earlier in this chapter, in my work, I have drawn inspiration from the existing works of rhetorical field scholars, who encourage an attention to the body within everyday micro-sites for studying the production, circulation, and recycling of rhetorical discourses. Some of the rhetorical field scholars politicize the field as a rhetorical practice, exerting its own rhetorical power on modes of embodiment and related food-based practices.<sup>663</sup> Yet, there is plenty of room for creative speculation, related to the body and food in everyday settings, within this emerging area of rhetorical scholarship. My work connects with the existing work on rhetorical studies featuring fieldwork, through two sensate bodies of knowledge, whose encounter is actually a queer alliance within rhetorical scholarship. I found the route to the queer rhetorical production of this kind of food-based everyday rhetoric, through an interlocking impasse between two fields which underscore the somatic vitality of experience: Dewey's theory of aesthetics and affect.

---

<sup>663</sup> Senda-Cook et al., "Interrogating," 24.

Apropos of the impasse's transformation into an artful rhizome in this chapter, I would offer that my work ultimately offers an artful exposure to understanding the rhetorical power of food, food truck spaces, and the ensuing sensory encounters, taking place within the culinary spaces. By artful, I mean playful attitudes and habitual orientations, which different co-producers of this culinary themed everyday rhetoric, utilize as mindful/mindless means of rhythmic attention and absorption in the aesthetic apprehension of such spaces. With Dewey's approach to artfulness, we get a rich aesthetic vocabulary, with which to pronounce our participation in and communication about lived experiences of food production and consumption, through notions of rhythm, habits, and sensations. Basically, for rhetorical studies, a Deweyan approach activates rhetoric's sensate qualities, its pragmatic, artful, and critical capacity to address the body's engagement with everyday communication on somatically-attuned patterns of lived experience. As my work underscores, habits of attention to food offer a somatic touchstone through which to evaluate the racial, sexual/gendered, spatial, and class-based distributions of everyday rhetoric in culinary spaces. However, where Dewey flails on accounts of aesthetics' predominant correlation with balance, moderation, beauty, and aesthetic perception as a celebration of human achievement, his queer alliance with affect theory shatters the fantasy of an aesthetic organic unity. Through an affective window into the body, food, and everyday rhetoric, I get a creative chance to infold less celebrated affects and emotions, (which I call life-affirming rhythms) such as disgust and anxiety into the aesthetic purview. Such unappetizing and unmeasured affects threaten the body's aesthetic balance with their appetitive and excessive rhythms, which is why they are important to examine in the context of everyday rhetoric.

If I am drawing on the sensory registers of lived experience to build a case for the body

and everyday rhetoric, it seems ethical to account for retarding, suspending, and arresting qualities of lived experience, and perhaps utilize them to expand our understanding of an aesthetic experience. The experiential expansion is particularly possible, if one supplements their fieldwork with rhetorical analyses of media representations, since the two modes of embodied observations, truly evince the crises and cracks in representation. My gustatory field in Austin's food truck culture enunciated the anti-aesthetic and anxiolytic labor of embodied research in culinary spaces. In comparison, my experiences with the media representation, *The Great Food Truck Race*, were every bit as delightfully perceptive as Dewey's description of an aesthetic experience. In both cases, my body was the sensory site of adjudication and the verdict could not be clearer. My bodily experience in the field-based space of gustation technically amounted to a failure, because of my pervasive and acute loss of appetite in the majority of Austin food truck spaces. However, I experienced more positive affects in an emotionally and aesthetically manicured televised environment. All in all, the sharp differences I registered in two embodied modes of observation did not fail the overall goal of project, which is to make an experientially expansive argument through Deweyan aesthetics and affect. Ultimately, affect's attention (in this case through Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome) to non-human and extra-human refrains of living, helps me flatten out some of the Deweyan uprightness, in recalibrating and politicizing an aesthetic experience as both a delightful perception and anti-aesthetic labor of sentience itself.

## Bibliography

- Agyeman, Julian, Caitlin Matthews, and Hannah Sobel. *Food Trucks, Cultural Identity, and Social Justice: From Loncheras to Lobsta Love*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.
- Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Ahmed, Sara. "Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness." *Signs* 35, no. 3 (2010): 571-594.
- Alfiero, Simona, Agata Lo Giudice, and Alessandro Bonadonna, "Street Food and Innovation: The Food Truck Phenomenon." *British Food Journal* 119 (2017): 2462-2476.
- American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. S.v. "Creep." Retrieved March 20 2018 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/creep>
- Beers, Clifford Whittingham. *A Mind that Found Itself: An Autobiography*. United States, 1908.
- Beers, Clifford Whittingham. *The Mental Hygiene Movement*. United States, 1921.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Concept of History," in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings: Volume Four: 1938–1940*, edited by Marcus Bullock, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Harry Zohn, 392. Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard, 2003 [1940].
- Berlant, Lauren Gail. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Berlant, Lauren and Lee Edelman, *Sex, Or the Unbearable*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Biesecker, Barbara A. Towards a transactional view of rhetorical and feminist theory: Rereading Hélène Cixous's *The Laugh of the Medusa*. *The Southern Communication Journal* 57 (1992): 86.



Bodhi Viet Vegan. "About Us." Accessed April 4, 2018.

<http://www.bodhivietveggies.com/index.html>

Braidotti, Rosi. "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Subjectivity," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 11-12 (2006).

Brinkema, Eugenie. *The Forms of the Affects*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Broom, Donald M. *Sentience and Animal welfare*. Wallingford, Oxfordshire: CABI, 2014.

Brummett, Barry. *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991.

Brummett, Barry. *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed January 10, 2017).

Brummett, Barry. *A Rhetoric of Style*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008.

Bryngelson, Bryng. "Applying Hygienic Principles to Speech Problems." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 29 (1943): 351-354.

Burke, Kenneth. *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3d ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Burke, Kenneth. *Counter-Statement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

Burke, Kenneth. *Late Poems, 1968-1993: Attitudinizing Verse-Wise, While Fending for One's Selph, and in a Style Somewhat Artificially Colloquial*, edited by Julie Whitaker & David Blakesley, 24-25. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005.

Cixous, Hélène, Keith Cohen, and Paula Cohen. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 875-893.

- Cixous, Hélène, 1937, Mireille Calle-Gruber 1945, and Inc NetLibrary. *Hélène Cixous, Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Clifford, Catherine. “Why Entrepreneurs Say SXSW is Still Worth the Crowds and Traffic.” Accessed April 4, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/08/why-entrepreneurs-say-sxsw-is-still-worth-the-crowds-and-traffic.html>
- Cohen, Herman. *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945*. Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1994.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. *Intellectual Activism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013.
- Cowen, Tyler. “Cheapskates, Pessimists, & Food Trucks.” *Foreign Policy* 196 (2012): 65-65.
- Crick, Nathan. *Democracy and Rhetoric: John Dewey on the Arts of Becoming*. University of South Carolina Press, 2010.
- Danisch, Robert. *Building a Social Democracy: The Promise of Rhetorical Pragmatism*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015.
- Daté, Shirish. “Donald Trump’s Voter Fraud Fixation Offers Window into Governing Via Twitter,” *Huffington Post*, January 26, 2017. Accessed January 26, 2017. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-twitter-voter-fraud\\_us\\_58890fc6e4b0024605fd8852?dmhhynx74fquayvi&](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-twitter-voter-fraud_us_58890fc6e4b0024605fd8852?dmhhynx74fquayvi&)
- Davis Julie H., Sheryl Gay Stolberg, and Thomas Kaplan. “Trump Alarms Lawmakers with Disparaging Words for Haiti and Africa.” *The New York Times*. Accessed April 10, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/us/politics/trump-shithole-countries.html>

- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. London: Athlone Press, 1988.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee, 1934.
- Dewey, John. *Experience and Education*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1950.
- Dewey, John. "Psychology." In vol. 2 of *The Later Works of John Dewey*, edited by Jo A. Boydston, 29. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967.
- Dewey, John. "Contributions to A Cyclopedia of Education Volumes 1 and 2." In vol. 6 of *The Middle Works of John Dewey*, edited by Jo A. Boydston, 360-366. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978.
- Dewey, John. "Human Nature and Conduct." In vol. 14 of *The Middle Works of John Dewey*, edited by Jo A. Boydston, 15-26. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983.
- Dewey, John. "How We Think." In vol. 8 of *The Later Works of John Dewey*, edited by Jo A. Boydston, 282-284. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.
- Dewey, John. "A Common Faith." In vol. 9 of *The Later Works of John Dewey*, edited by Jo A. Boydston, 12. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.
- Deutsch, Eliot, trans. *The Bhagavad Gita*. Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.
- Denzin, N. "The Poststructural Crisis in the Social Sciences: Learning from James Joyce. In *Postmodern Representations: Truth Power, and Mimesis in the Human Sciences and*

- Public Culture*, edited by R. H. Brown, 38-59. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1995.
- Dickinson, Greg, Carole Blair, Brian L. Ott, and John Louis Lucaites, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014.
- Dougherty, Geoff. "Chicago's Food Trucks: Wrapped in Red Tape," *Gastronomica* 12 (2012): 62-65.
- Dunn, Jennifer C. "Going to Work at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch: Potentials of Rhetorical and Ethnographic Methods for Cultural Studies." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 525-535.
- Easwaran, Eknath, intr. & trans., *The Bhagavad Gita: (Classics of Indian Spirituality)*. Tomales: Nilgiri Press, 2007.
- Ehrenfeucht, Reina. "Do Food Trucks and Pedestrians Conflict on Urban Streets." *Journal of Urban Design* 22 (2017): 273-290.
- Endres, Danielle, Aaron Hess, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Michael K. Middleton. *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Study Rhetoric In Situ*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015.
- Endres, Danielle, Aaron Hess, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Michael K. Middleton. "In Situ Rhetoric: Intersections between Qualitative Inquiry, Fieldwork, and Rhetoric." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16, no. 6 (2016): 511-524.
- Farlex Dictionary of Idioms*. S.v. "Be Carried Out Feet First." Retrieved March 12 2018 from <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/be+carried+out+feet+first>

- Farlex Dictionary of Idioms*. S.v. "Jump in Feet First." Retrieved March 12 2018 from <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/be+carried+out+feet+first>
- Figlerowicz, Marta. "Affect Theory Dossier: An Introduction," *Qui Parle* 20 (2012): 3-18.
- Florence, Tyler. "Potatoes in Pocatello." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 4, episode 3, The Food Network. New York: September 1, 2013. iTunes.
- Florence, Tyler. "The Big 'Not So Easy'." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 1, The Food Network. New York: August 20, 2017. iTunes.
- Florence, Tyler. "New Marching Orders." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 2, The Food Network. New York: August 20, 2017. iTunes.
- Florence, Tyler. "Sweet Home Alabama." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 3, The Food Network. New York: August 20, 2017. iTunes.
- Florence, Tyler. "Hot Chicken in the City." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 4, The Food Network. New York: August 20, 2017. iTunes.
- Florence, Tyler. "Fresh Off the Farm." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 5, The Food Network. New York: August 20, 2017. iTunes.
- Florence, Tyler. "The Race through Savannah." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 8, episode 6, The Food Network. New York: August 20, 2017. iTunes.
- Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It is Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Frankenberry, Nancy. "American Pragmatism," Paul, Draper Charles, Taliaferro, & Philip L, Quinn (eds.). *Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2010.

- Freeman, Doug. "St. Patrick's Day and SXSW: The collision of 2 Austin Traditions." *The Daily Dot*. Accessed April 6, 2018. <https://www.dailydot.com/irl/jameson-st-patricks-day-sxsw/>
- Friedman, Harris L. "Using Aikido and Transpersonal Psychology Concepts as Tools for Reconciling Conflict: Focus on Aikido and Related Martial Arts, Such as Hapkido." *Neuroquantology* 14, no. 2 (June 2016): 213-225.
- G'Day Australia House @ SXSW. "Event Description." Accessed April 6, 2018. <http://www.gdayusa.org/event/gday-usa-experience-australia-sxsw-2018>
- G'Day USA. "The Program." Accessed April 6, 2018. <http://www.gdayusa.org/about/>
- Gehrke, Pat J. *The Ethics and Politics of Speech: Communication and Rhetoric in the Twentieth Century*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009.
- Gehrke, Pat J. and William M. Keith, eds. *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Business*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Greenebaum, Jessica Beth. "Questioning the Concept of Vegan Privilege: A Commentary." *Humanity & Society* 41, no. 3 (2017): 355-372.
- Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Griffin, Nathan S. *Understanding Veganism: Biography and Identity*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-52102-2.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. "Habit Today: Ravaissou, Bergson, Deleuze and Us," *Body & Society* 19 (2013): 217-39.
- Gunn, Joshua. "Speech's Sanatorium." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 no. 1 (2015): 18-33.

Gunn, Joshua and Frank E. X. Dance, "The Silencing of Speech in the Late Twentieth Century."

In *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Business*, edited by Pat J.

Gehrke and William M. Keith, 64-81. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Hajela, Deepti. "Sympathy for White Austin Bomber Stirs Debate about Race." PBS News Hour.

Accessed March 27, 2018. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/sympathy-for-white-austin-bomber-stirs-debate-about-race>

Haliliuc, Alina. "Being, Evoking, and Reflecting from the Field: A Case for Critical

Ethnography in Audience-Centered Rhetorical Criticism." In *Text + Field: Innovations in*

*Rhetorical Method*, edited by Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and

Robert G. Howard, 134-135. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016.

Harper, A Breeze. "Going Beyond the Normative White "Post-Racial" Vegan Epistemology." In

*Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World*, edited by Psyche

Williams Forson and Carole Counihan. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013. 155-156.

Accessed April 4, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Hauser, Gerard A. "Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetorality of Public Opinion."

*Communication Monographs* 65 (1998):83-107.

Hawhee, Debra. "Language as Sensuous Action: Sir Richard Paget, Kenneth Burke, and Gesture-

Speech Theory." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (2006): 331-54.

Hawhee, Debra. "Rhetoric's Sensorium." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (2015): 2-17.

Hayes-Conroy, Allison and Jessica Hayes-Conroy. "Visceral Difference: Variations in Feeling

(Slow) Food." In *Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World*, edited

- by Psyche Williams Forson and Carole Counihan, 516. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013. Accessed April 4, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Hayward, Matt W., Paul J. de Tores, and Peter B. Banks. "Habitat Use of the Quokka, *Setonix Brachyurus* (Macropodidae: Marsupialia), in the Northern Jarrah Forest of Australia." *Journal of Mammalogy* 86, no. 4 (2005): 683-688.
- Hellier, Jennifer L., ed. *The Five Senses and Beyond: The Encyclopedia of Perception*. Westport: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2016. Accessed March 6, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Hess, Aaron. "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric." *Communication Studies* 62 (2011): 127-152.
- Hess, Aaron. "Embodied Judgment: A Call for Phronetic Orientation in Rhetorical Ethnography." In *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, edited by Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert G. Howard, 87-89. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016.
- Hulu. "High Steaks in Texas." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 6, episode 4. Accessed March 6, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1087437>
- Hulu. "Family Face-Off: A Family Affair." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 1. Accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193122>
- Hulu. "Things Get Berry Interesting." *The Great Food Truck Race*, season 7, episode 2. Accessed March 6, 2018, <https://www.hulu.com/watch/1193120>
- Ipatenco, Sara. "Is It Better to Sit or Stand While Eating?" *Livestrong.com*. Accessed April 4, 2018. <https://www.livestrong.com/article/491625-is-it-better-to-sit-or-stand-while-eating/>



- Irvin, Cate. "Constructing Hybridized Authenticities in the Gourmet Food Truck Scene: Constructing Hybridized Authenticities." *Symbolic Interaction* 40 (2017): 43-62.
- Ives, Kelly. *Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva: The Jouissance of French Feminism*. Kent: Crescent Moon Publishing 2013.
- Kang, Cecilia. "That Old Phone Trump Uses for Twitter could be an Opening to Security Threats," *The New York Times*, January 25, 2017. Accessed January 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/25/technology/donald-trump-phone-social-media-security.html>.
- Kelly, Michael. *A Hunger for Aesthetics: Enacting the Demands of Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.
- Kraft, Kenneth. *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Le Séminaire X: L'angoisse (Anxiety) 1962-63*. Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French typescripts. Unpublished seminar transcript.
- Landau, Jamie. "Feeling Rhetorical Critics: Another Affective-Emotional Field Method for Rhetorical Studies." In *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, edited by Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez and Robert G. Howard, 73. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016.
- Lane, F. H. "Action and Emotion in Speaking." *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* 2 no. 3 (1916): 221-228.
- Lange, Carl Georg, William James, and Istar A. Haupt. *The Emotions*. Vol. 1.1. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins Company, 1922.

- Lavy, Brendan L., Erin D. Dascher, and Ronald R. Hagelman. "Media Portrayal of Gentrification and Redevelopment on Rainey Street in Austin, Texas (USA), 2000–2014." *City, Culture and Society* 7, no. 4 (2016): 197-207.
- Leddy, Thomas. *The Extraordinary in the Ordinary: The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2012.
- Lemon, Robert "The Spatial Practices of Food Trucks." In *Food Trucks, Cultural Identity, and Social Justice*, edited by Julian Agyeman, Caitlin Matthews, and Hannah Sobel, 169. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.
- Light, Elinor. "Visualizing Homeland: Remembering 9/11 and the Production of the Surveilling Flâneur." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 536-547.
- Lipari, Lisbeth. *Listening, Thinking, Being: Toward an Ethics of Attunement*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014.
- Lipari, Lisbeth. "On Interlistening and the Idea of Dialogue." *Theory & Psychology* 24 (2014): 504-523.
- Lurigio, Arthur J. "Duchenne Smile." In *Encyclopedia of Deception*, edited by Timothy R. Levine, 318-319. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014. doi: 10.4135/9781483306902.n121.
- Macmullan, Terrance. *Habits of Whiteness: A Pragmatist Reconstruction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.
- Marder, Michael. *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

- Marković, Slobodan. "Components of Aesthetic Experience: Aesthetic Fascination, Aesthetic Appraisal and Aesthetic Emotion." *Iperception* 3 (2012): 1-17.
- Martin, Nina. "Food Fight! Immigrant Street Vendors, Gourmet Food Trucks and the Differential Valuation of Creative Producers in Chicago." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38 (2014): 1867-1883.
- Martin, Nina. "Why Regulations May Matter Less Than We Think: Street Vending in Chicago and in Durham, North Carolina." In *Food Trucks, Cultural Identity, and Social Justice*, edited by Julian Agyeman, Caitlin Matthews, and Hannah Sobel, 212. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.
- Massumi, Brian, trans. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Athlone Press, 1988.
- Massumi, Brian. "The Autonomy of Affect." *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995): 83-109.
- McCole, John. *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- McHendry Jr., George F. (Guy). "Thank You for Participating in Security: Engaging Airport Security Checkpoints via Participatory Critical Rhetoric." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 548-559.
- McKinnon, Sara L., Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard, eds. *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016.

McKinnon, Sara L., Jenell Johnson, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard.

“Rhetoric and Ethics Revisited: What happens when Rhetorical Scholars go into the Field.” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16, no. 6 (2016): 560-570.

Mgadmi, Mahassen. “Black Women’s Identity: Stereotypes, Respectability and Passionlessness (1890-1930).” *Revue LISA / LISA e-Journal* no. Vol. VII – n°1 (2009): 40-55.

Middleton, Michael K., Samantha Senda-Cook, Aaron Hess, and Danielle Endres,

“Contemplating the Participatory Turn in Rhetorical Criticism.” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 16 (2016): 571-580.

Morris, Charles E. “(Self-)Portrait of Prof. R.C.: A Retrospective.” *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 4-42.

Morris, Charles E. and Catherine Helen Palczewski, “Sexing Communication.” In *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Business*, edited by Pat J. Gehrke and William M. Keith, 128-165. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Muñoz, José E. “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts.” *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 8 (1996): 5-16.

Murray, Joddy. *Non-Discursive Rhetoric: Image and Affect in Multimodal Composition*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2009.

Myers, JoAnne. *Historical Dictionary of the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movements: Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements Series*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013. Accessed March 2, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.

- Nautiyal, Jaishikha. "Writing the Desire that Fire Bore: Emergent Motherhood in Hélène Cixous's *The Book of Promethea*." *Women's Studies in Communication* 39 no. 4 (2016): 380-398.
- Nhat Hanh, Thich. *Peace of Mind: Becoming Fully Present*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2013.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and An Appendix of Songs*, edited by Bernard Williams, translated by Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro (poems), 38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. United States: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2014. Kindle.
- Petermann, Waldermar. "Attitudes as Equipment for Living." *The Journal of Kenneth Burke Society* 11, no. 1 (2015), [http://kbjournal.org/petermann\\_attitudes](http://kbjournal.org/petermann_attitudes).
- Pezzullo, Phaedra C. "Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement." *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001): 1-25.
- Pezzullo, Phaedra C. "Afterword: Decentralizing and Regenerating the Field." in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Methods* In *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, edited by Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez and Robert G. Howard, 179-81. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016.
- Puolakka, Kalle. "Dewey and Everyday Aesthetics - A New Look." *Contemporary Aesthetics* 12 (2014).
- Raney, Nicole. "Meat-loving Austin named top city for vegans? Better believe it." *Culturemap*. Accessed April 7, 2018. <http://austin.culturemap.com/news/restaurants-bars/04-22-16-peta-top-10-vegan-friendly-cities-2016-austin/>

- Reeves, Kimberly. "Are Austin Food Trucks Coming Off the Menu?" Accessed March 17, 2018.  
<https://www.bisnow.com/austin-san-antonio/news/state-of-market/could-the-food-truck-business-in-austin-be-toast-86145>
- Ritchie, Marnie. "Becoming Discouraged: Affect and the Rhetorical Production of Negative Emotion in Therapeutic Unemployment Discourses." Master's Thesis, ProQuest.
- Schechner, Richard. *Performed Imaginaries*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, and Adam Frank. "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins." *Critical Inquiry* 21 (1995): 496-522.
- Senda-Cook, Samantha, Michael K. Middleton, and Danielle Endres. "Interrogating the "Field"." In *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, edited by Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez and Robert G. Howard, 32. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016.
- Shusterman, Richard. *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000.
- Shusterman, Richard. *Thinking Through The Body*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Silvestri, Lisa, "Context drives Method: Studying Social Media Use in a War Zone." In *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, edited by Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez and Robert G. Howard, 163-64. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2016.
- Simonson, Peter, "Varieties of Pragmatism and Communication: Visions and Revisions from Peirce to Peters." In *American Pragmatism and Communication Research*, edited by

- David. K. Perry. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Siu, Lok, "Twenty-First Century Food Trucks: Mobility, Social Media, and Urban Hipness." In *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader*, edited by Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan, and Anita Mannur, 267-281. New York: NYU Press, 2014. Accessed February 7, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- SouthBites® Trailer Park. "About." Accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.sxsw.com/exhibitions/southbites/>
- Stewart, Kathleen. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Stob, Paul. "'Terministic Screens,' Social Constructionism, and the Language of Experience: Kenneth Burke's Utilization of William James." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 41 (2008): 130-152.
- Stuhr, John J. ed., *Classical American Philosophy: Essential Readings and Interpretive Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Stroud, Scott R. "John Dewey and the Question of Artful Communication." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 41 (2008): 155-183.
- Stroud, Scott R. "Orientational Meliorism, Pragmatist Aesthetics, and the "Bhagavad Gita." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 43 (2009): 1-17.
- Stroud, Scott R. "What Does Pragmatic Meliorism Mean for Rhetoric?" *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 43-60.
- SXSW. "History Intro." Accessed March 15, 2018. <https://www.sxsw.com/about/history/>
- The Great Food Truck Race. "The Great Food Truck Race S01E01." Accessed March 2, 2018. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_InJ1Bq2Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_InJ1Bq2Rw)

The Great Food Truck Race. "The Great Food Truck Race S01E02." Accessed March 3, 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeLpnzHIDKE>

The Great Food Truck Race. "The Great Food Truck Race S01E03." Accessed March 3, 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4IWSkRrQt8>

The Great Food Truck Race. "The Great Food Truck Race S01E04." Accessed March 3, 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vezVyDXV2Fs>

The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off. "About the Show." Accessed February 16, 2018.

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race>.

The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off. "About the Host." Accessed February 16, 2018.

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race>.

The Great Food Truck Race: Family Face-Off. "The Great Food Truck Race Episodes."

Accessed February 16, 2018. <https://www.foodnetwork.com/shows/the-great-food-truck-race/episodes/>

The Great Food Truck Race. "News." Accessed February 20, 2018.

<http://www.tvguide.com/tvshows/the-great-food-truck-race/news/327359/>

Thornton, Davi. "Transformations of the Ideal mother: The Story of Mommy Economicus and her Amazing Brain." *Women's Studies in Communication* 37 (2014): 271-91.

Tomkins, Silvan S. *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness: Volume I: The Positive Affects*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2008.

Trivedi-Grenier, Leena. "Food Trucks." In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Food Issues*, edited by Ken Albala, 634-637. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015. doi: 10.4135/9781483346304.n192.



- Twine, Richard. "Vegan Killjoys at the Table—Contesting Happiness and Negotiating Relationships with Food Practices." *Societies* 4, no. 4 (2014): 623-639.
- Watkins, Megan. "Desiring Recognition, Accumulating Affect." in *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, 269-285. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Watson, Brandon. "Austin declared one of America's most vegetarian-friendly cities." *Culturemap*, Accessed April 7, 2018. <http://austin.culturemap.com/news/restaurants-bars/10-18-17-most-vegetarian-vegan-friendly-cities-wallethub/>
- Weber, David. *The Food Truck Handbook: Start, Grow, and Succeed in The Mobile Food Business*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012.
- Welch, Kelly. "Black Criminal Stereotypes and Racial Profiling." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 23 (2007): 276-288.
- Wessel, Ginette. "From Place to Nonplace: A Case Study of Social Media and Contemporary Food Trucks," *Journal of Urban Design* 17 (2012): 511-531.
- Winans, James A. *Public Speaking*. Ithaca: Sewell, 1915.
- Woolbert, Charles H. The Problem in Pragmatism. "*Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* 2 no. 3 (1916): 264-274.
- Wyatt, J., K. Gale, S. Gannon, B. Davies, N. K. Denzin, and E. A. St. Pierre. "Deleuze and Collaborative Writing: Responding to/With "JKSB"." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 14, no. 4 (2014): 407-416.

Wrenn, Corey Lee. "Trump Veganism: A Political Survey of American Vegans in the Era of Identity Politics." *Societies*, 7 (2017): 32.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.3390/soc7040032>

Wynn, Jonathan R. *Music City: American Festivals and Placemaking in Austin, Nashville, and Newport*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.